

Tracks and trails; or, Incidents in the life of a Minnesota territorial pioneer ...

Cap't. "Natte" Dally (lower left) and Comrades Just Starting on a Hunt in the Autumn of 1874.

TRACKS AND TRAILS OR Incidents in the Life of a Minnesota Territorial Pioneer BY CAPT. "NATE" DALLY Owner and Captain of the "Leila D" Steamboat, the First Steamboat Built and Operated on Leech Lake by a Private Individual Published by THE CASS COUNTY PIONEER, WALKER, MINN

F606 .D14

Copyright, 1931 By Nathan Dally.

MAR 21 1931 ©CIA 35343

FOREWORD

When, some years ago, I commenced to write these sketches, I had no idea of having them published, even in a newspaper, but intended to have them typewritten and deposit a copy with the Minnesota State Historical Society, in order that any of my descendants, or anyone else who might be curious to know how we lived and also what happened in those days, might have their curiosity gratified to a certain extent.

Happening to be in the office of the Detroit Record, I told Mr. Benshoof of my intentions and he advised me not to trust a matter of that kind of typewritten stuff as it was too short lived. He advised me to have it printed and his advice caused me to impose the following upon the public. —The Author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page.

I A Five Hundred Mile Trek From Putnam County, Illinois to Sterns County, Minnesota, in 1856 1

II Getting Settled After Arriving From Butnam County, Illinois 8

III A 500 Mile Trip Down the Mississippi River in 1862 15

IV When I Nearly Met Two Hostile Sioux Indians, Little Crow and his Son, in the Spring of 1863 24

V Some Indian Fights 33

VI The Last Indian Raid in Southside Township, Wright County, Minnesota 37

VII The Sioux Indians 40

VIII The Mystery of the Lost Children of the Two River Settlement 46

IX The Mystery of the Disappearance of Miss McNeal 49

X When I received the Worst Scare of my Life 52

XI Who Killed Andrew Leighton 57

XII Who was he and What Caused his Death 59

XIII When the Indian Police Failed to get the Booze 61

XIV Dead Man's Spur 68

Library of Congress

XV Some Early History of Lakeport Township 71

XVI Steamboating on Leech Lake in the Early Days 76

XVII Some of Leech Lake's Beauty Spots 84

XVIII The Battle of Sugar Boint and What led up to it 88

XIX When I Brought Gen. Bacon and his Troops off After the Battle of Sugar Point 97

XX Some Indians I Have Known 101

XXI My War With the Red River Lumber Company 106

XXII Where was the Northwest Fur Company's Stockade Located on Leech Lake 114

XXIII Some Interesting Things I have Seen 117

XXIV An Account of a Moose Hunt 123

XXV Leech Lake in Autumn 127

XXVI Monograph on Kabekona Lake 134

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Page.

Off For A Hunt Frontispiece

The "Leila D" 75

Part of Walker, Minnesota Lake Front in 1897 81

Library of Congress

General John M. Bacon 87

Major Wilkinson 89

Frank Briggs 93

Bug-ah-nah-ghe-shig, (Hole-in-the-Day) 96

Pow-wow at the "Old Agency" 99

Red Hair 102

Mah-ge-gah-bow 105

Scene at Bridge Near Outlet of Kabekona Lake 133

Scene on North Shore of Kabekona Lake 136

CHAPTER I A Five Hundred Mile Trek From Putnam County, Illinois, to Sterns County, Minnesota, in 1856

In the year 1855, my father, Charles Dally, with his wife and six children were living on a small farm near Senachwine, (afterward Putnam, Futnam County, Ill.) In that year he contracted the Minnesota Fever and sold his farm but retained possession for one year.

In he spring on 1856, after putting all of his farm into small grain, he sallied out to view the "promised land". He went to Rock Island, Ill., by rail, there took a steamer and went up the "father of waters" to Reed's Landing, where he hiked out into the country to find a place to build a mill to grind grain into flour. Such a mill at that time was known as a "grist mill", and ground grain for anybody and everybody who wished to have it done, and the person owning the grain could may for having it ground or could allow the miller to take toll for the grinding, the latter mode being generally followed.

Library of Congress

My father found a suitable location of the south fork of the Zumbro River, about 35 miles from Red Wing, and clear beyond the then settled portion of the country.

As it was almost impossible to hire a team for love or money, he made up his mind that in all probability his claim would be alright until he could return with his family after harvesting his crop, so he did not "file" on his claim and build a claim shanty as was required by law, but trusted to luck.

On his return home he came through Chicago, Ill., and there bought a "portable grist mill" and ordered it shipped to Dunleith, Ill., on the Mississippi River, opposite Dubuque, Iowa.

He returned home, bought three yokes of oxen, and took a job of breaking 60 acres of prairie land to keep him busy while his crop of small grain was maturing.

I was then eight years old and was chosen as the pilot to steer those oxen while turning over those 60 acres of prairie sod.

I suppose that it was good exercise for me as I know that I developed a voice that has always stayed with me in spite of all my efforts to modulate it to reasonable proportions.

2

About the 1st of September, 1856, after having harvested and sold our grain, we started for the "Promised Land" in two "prairie schooners," or covered wagons, one of which we loaded with some farm tools and a heavy load of flour and feed, and was drawn by three pairs of oxen in charge of a young man named Geo. Haines, a son of neighbor.

The other wagon was known as a "wide track" wagon, as the box was four inches wider than a common wagon, thus giving more room for the stowing of tent, cooking, stove, bedding, provisions and children, and was drawn by a good span of horses, driven by man father. I that wagon rode my mother, my elder sister, my younger brothers and sisters,

Library of Congress

while I was supposed to ride on the ox wagon with Haines, but in fact did very little riding as I preferred to run loose along with our grey hound dog.

That dog and had 1 lots of fun as he could whip anything that wanted to have trouble with him. He was not quarrelsome and would not interfere with another dog as long as the behaved himself, but if he wanted to try conclusions he always got a plenty before he could get away. I think the grey hound had a little the advantage as before starting my father had put a wide leather collar studded with long sharp spikes around his neck.

After starting, everything went all right until we came to a long hill that we had to descend, when old Jim, our off pole ox, declined to proceed any farther. Geo. Haines, the driver, whipped and yelled, and tried to make the other oxen pull old Jim along but it was hard work as he was the largest of the lot and he sat right down and braced all four of his feet and tried his utmost to be immovable. Some one finally suggested that he might be afraid to descend the hill with the other teams in front of him, so George unhitched the others and drove them out of the way, when old Jim immediately arose and went down the hill without any farther trouble. He soon learned that he could descend a hill and there was no more trouble after that.

We camped that first night at Indian town, "Tiskilwah", my father and mother's first home after they were married. My father pointed out to us children the grave of old Tiskilwa, an Indian Chief, after whom the town was afterward named. He was buried on a high bluff west of the town.

We continued our journey and passed through Princeton, the County Seat of Putnam County and then on to Dixon, where we crossed the Rock River. Before reaching Dixon, we fell in with two teams from near Urbana, Ill., who were also bound for Minnesota, but were going to the vicinity of St. Cloud. One of these teams was driven by a man named John Carlisle, who had a span o mules on the tongue and a yoke of oxen in the lead, white the other had a team of three yokes of oxen, driven by a man named Carpenter, in the

Library of Congress

employ of Mr. William Hooper, who's 14 year old son David, was in charge of several cows belonging to his father. 3 I forgot to mention in the proper place that had two cows leading at the rear end of our ox team, and we had a crate of chicken fastened to the rear end of that wagon box.

The autumn of 1856 was an exciting time politically, as a presidential campaign was on and almost everybody was highly enthusiastic on either one side or the other and as we met other men we would call out, "Hurrah for Fremont and Dayton" and generally the reply would be "Yes sir, that's the talk" but sometimes they would answer with "Hurrah for Buchanan and Breckenridge". The latter being the Democratic nominees while the former were the choice of the Republicans.

The Urbana teams and us traveled and camped together for a long time and Dave Hooper and I became fast friends although he was six years older than I, and we were together all the time as I would help him drive his cows and when he and Carpenter changed off and Dave would drive the ox team I would ride with him, and I soon got to think that there was no other such boy as Dave Hooper. Poor Dave, in after years he grew up and when the Civil War broke out he joined the Third Minnesota Volunteers, was elected Standard Bearer, passed through the war unharmed, came home and went to studying law, then became insane and died.

I do not remember all of the towns that we passed through, but know that we went through Galena, Ill., and reached the Mississippi at Dunleith, Ill., (East Dubuque now), then we crossed the river on a steam ferry to Dubuque, Iowa. It was there that I first saw the beautiful large side wheel steamer, "The Milwaukee" as she was lying at the levee a short distance above the ferry dock. Those three monstrous gold beads on her Monkey Brace between her smoke stacks took my boyish eye and I thought she was the most beautiful steamer that I ever saw, and I have not changed my mind since.

Library of Congress

We struck out northwest from Dubuque, passed through Decorah, and entered Minnesota at a little own called Elliota, and camped for the night about one-half mile northwest of the town.

Father had, all along, been praising up Minnesota and had been telling of its nice brooks with gravel beds, over which the clean water purled and ran.

Where we camped that night there was nice dry meadow through which there meandered a little stream that a person could step over almost any where. We would always turn the cattle out to graze in the evening after having driven about twenty miles each day, then before we retired for the night we would tie them up and keep them tied during the night lest they might attempt to return and then in the morning we would turn them out and let them feed while preparing and eating our breakfast.

On this particular morning we had turned them out and as Carpenter was bringing in the oxen to hitch up one of the oxen, as he stepped across the little stream, happened to get lengthwise of it and fell in, and as he struggled to extricate himself he sunk deeper until in a short time nothing but his head was above the water and mud, with his mate standing on the bank but unable to pull him out. So they had to take another pair of oxen and hitch a chain to his horns and pull him out. Of course they had a lot of fun at my father's expense over the episode.

I forgot to mention in the proper place, that near Galena we passed through the lead mining country and saw many "prospect holes" where men had been digging to find lead ore, which at one time was very abundant there and some men made large fortunes when they happened to strike the right place. Some of the richest finds were in caverns in limestone rock, such caverns being lined with lead ore sometimes six inches thick. We saw men hauling the ore in dump carts to the smelter where the lead, after being freed from its impurities, was run into molds which cast it into triangular bars called "pigs", each pig weighing about 150 pounds.

Library of Congress

In our voyage down the Mississippi in 1862 we saw lots of those "pigs" piled on the river bank awaiting shipment by steamer.

After rescuing the ox from the mud, we resumed our northward trek and finally came to the Zumbro river a few miles below where my father had located his claim the spring previously. We camped on the south bank of the stream and father and Haines mounted horses and rode up to see how things were at his claim. They were greatly surprised to find a town on his claim, there being about thirty buildings in sight where for miles and miles had been open prairie the spring before.

My father's mill site was gone to someone else and the town of Zumbrota was being built there, so he had to look elsewhere for another claim.

After looking around for about week and finding nothing to suit him, my father and mother decided to follow the Urbana teams who had left us when we halted a week previously. So we again took up our line of march, northward, and came through Cannon Falls and on until we reached the St. Peters River, (Now the Minnesota River) at Mendota, opposite Fort Snelling, where we crossed the river on a ferry and came up on the bluff northwest of the Fort where I first saw United States Soldiers, a squad of whom were filing into a gate in the west wall of the Fort.

We then continued on north toward St. Anthony and camped for the night on the south side of Minnehaha creek where the old government road from the Fort to St. Anthony crossed it about forty or fifty rods above the falls.

It was at that camp that we first saw the raider grass hoppers or Rock Mountain locusts, which were in swarms around our camp, they having just arrived.

Next morning at day light father took his rifle and went down stream but soon returned and told us that the falls were only a short distance away and after we had our breakfast we all went down and viewed what, to us, was a wonderful sight. My mother and us children

Library of Congress

contented ourselves with a view from the south bank, but father and Haines went down and passed around behind the falls to the other side of the stream. We returned to camp and while preparing to start I looked up the road to the north and saw a man coming on a pony and called my father's attention to him.

He looked at him steadily for a few seconds and said "that fellow rides just like an Indian" and so it proved to be. He was on his way to the fort with a sack of wild ducks.

As we proceeded north toward St. Anthony we passed a large white house on the east side of the road which we afterward learned was the residence of Philander Prescott, who was afterwards killed by the Sioux in their outbreak six years later, when he was government farmer at the Agency on Minnesota River, where he was endeavoring to teach the Indians how to farm. He had a Sioux woman for his wife and had a family of half-breed children. He and one of his sons stayed all night at my father's house during the winter of 1856-7, being engaged at the time in locating land on which the "script" issued by the United States Government to all mixed bloods, could be filed.

We arrived at St. Anthony, and found quite a town on the East side but only a few houses at the west end of the bridge.

We kept up on the east side to Coon Creek where we camped for the night.

I think that it was while we were camped at noon, the next day, that we saw a train of those famous "Red River Cart" as they pursued their screeching, squawking way from the Red River settlement near Winnipeg where the Earl of Selkirk, in 1812, planted a colony of Scotch Highlanders, to their nearest market at St. Paul, Minnesota, where they traded their fur, buffalo robes and pemmican for such articles and supplies as they needed in their far northern home. Those carts were wonderful pieces of mechanism, built almost wholly of wood. In fact, if I remember, there were only four small pieces of iron in the makeup of each. Two linch pins to hold the ponderous wheels in place on their wooden axles and

Library of Congress

two iron pins through the heavy thills where the motor, which was usually a single ox, was attached to them.

We proceeded up the east side until we reached Monticello, where we crossed the ferry to the west side.

A steam saw mill was being built there, the boiler of which, if I remember right, blew up in the summer of 1857. We kept up the west side and camped for the night near the mouth of Silver Creck.

The next morning, an old gentleman named Kent came along about the time we started from camp. He lived about one and one half miles southwest of Clearwater on the Clearwater river, and we started for his place, where we arrived in the afternoon. The next morning, my father and Haines took the horses and went up to Clearwater Lake where my father decided to locate. That evening, when they returned, they told of the swarms of black bass that they had seen in the outlet of the lake.

When we started from Illinois, father had, so he thought, provided himself with all that he would need in a new country, but he had forgotten fishing lines, though he had a plenty of hooks, but the matter of not having lines did not block him, for after supper he went out and pulled a bunch of long hair from a horses tail and after soaking it in warm water for a short time, he stripped up his pants and drawers to bare his leg on which to roll the horse hair and in a few minutes he had made a line of twelve or fourteen feet long and stout enough to hold any ordinary fish.

The next morning we started on the last stage of our journey.

As there was no road directly up the river we took a road that led to Fairhaven for the first few miles. This road had been made by Thomas C. Partridge and his colony of Ohio people during the early summer of 1856. We followed it to where Mr. B. T. Lyons had just put up his house and there we took the southwest road that led to Joseph Pratt's place,

Library of Congress

then to where Joshua Kemp was about to build his house, then from there on we had to cut our own road.

Along in the afternoon we came out on a high bluff overlooking Clearwater Lake and we beheld one of the most beautiful sights that I ever saw. That high bluff on the north shore of the lake, about one-third of a mile west of the outlet, from which we first saw the lake we afterward christened "Mount Nebo." A few rods back from its brow stood a large earthen mound built by people in a long past age as a mausoleum for their dead but who they were or when they lived no one could ever tell. My late learned friend, the Honorable Jacob V. Brower, believed that they were made by the ancestors of the Sioux Indians but his arguments failed to convince me that such was the case, as in my youth a six years acquaintanceship with three hundred Sioux Indians and their habits leads me to believe that no Sioux ever performed the labor that such a job as building a mound like that entailed, as aside from carrying in game I do not remember of ever seeing a Sioux Indian do anything that in the least resembled work as they deemed it beneath the dignity of a warrior to do menial labor of any kind, as that was a job for the females.

Off to the South and southeast lay that magnificent sheet of water known as Clearwater Lake, with its points and islands and wooded shores resplendent in all their autumnal glory of red and gold, seen through the haze of the Indian summer, made the most wonderful picture that I had ever beheld. The lake itself was like a mirror and on its surface disporting themselves were enormous flocks of wild ducks who, when they arose, would make a noise almost like thunder. My mother and us children sat there for some time enjoying the glorious scene while my father and Haines were engaged in cutting a road down the shore of the outlet, about one-third of a mile distant. When they returned we drove down to the outlet and pitched our tents, having reached the end of our five hundred mile journey at last, October 6, 1856.

Next morning, father cut a small sapling for a fish pole and attached his horse hair line with a hook on the end and set me to fishing while he and Haines got busy at other things

Library of Congress

that needed their attention but before they had got started to work I yanked out a big black bass, the first fish that I had ever caught, but not the last.

CHAPTER II Getting Settled After Arriving From Putnam County, Ill.

After Camping all night at our destination my father set met to fishing while he and the hired man prepared to build a house and stable and get things ready for winter that might come any day although the beautiful Indian Summer continued for about a month and we were in our new houst with a seven foot open fire place built of cobble stones before the tenth of November when snow came and winter set in.

As yet we had seen no Indians at our place but one evening, shortly after the lake had frozen over I saw two men coming across the lake from the south-east and when they were about ont-third of a mile off my father after watching them for a minute or so, said, "Those men walk just like Indians" and so they proved to be. One of them was a large, middleaged man, dressed up in, what I thought, a highly picturesque style, while the other was younger and was dressed in more plain clothes, although dressed like an Indian of that period.

As they could talk no English and we were equally as well equipped in Indian, communication, except by signs was limited.

Father invited them in and gave them their supper and as our beds were all occupied by grown people and children our visitors seemed content to lie by the fire place all night and after partaking of a rousing breakfast next morning they proceeded on their journey.

A short time after that two came one day when father and the hired man were absent. Mother gave them their dinner and after they had sat by the fire and smoked for some time, one of them arose and went out while the other sat still.

Library of Congress

My mother spoke to me in a low tone and told me to go and see what the absentee was doing. I stepped outside just in time to see him emerge from an addition that father had commenced to build on the west end of the house and over his shoulder he had a bundle of coon skins that father had caught.

I called out, "Mother, he is stealing our coon skins". She came rushing through the door and called to him to bring back those coon skins but she might just as well have saved her breath as far as getting the furs back was concerned.

When my father returned in the evening and heard what had happened to his furs he did not say much but what he did say indicated that he would not fall on the neck of the next Indian, who arrived to claim his hospitality, and weep for joy.

No more came for nearly two months and in the meantime snow had fallen to a depth of three feet or more, and it was soft, loose snow in which a person even on common snow shoes would sink deeply.

Father had made himself a sled of ordinary height but as it was almost impossible to do anything with that, he made another which he christened his "Shanghigh sled" as it was nearly three feet high.

One day when father and Haines were away from the house, an Indian came that had the most wonderful pair of snow shoes that I have ever seen. They were at least six feet long and eighteen or twenty inches wide. He stayed to dinner and then struck out on his snow shoes across the lake south to the other shore, about one and one-half miles distant. I remember watching the queer actions that he made as he rocked back and forth on those immense shoes.

That evening, after supper, as we were sitting in a semi circle around a big fire in our seven foot fire place, our greyhound dog, Prince, who had accompanied us on our trek, became uneasy and my father told me to let him out of doors, whereupon I went and

Library of Congress

opened the door and that dog shot out of that door like he had been thrown from a catapult and as he went he emitted a snarl that indicated trouble for something or somebody.

Before I had time to think, an Indian jumped through the door colliding with and nearly knocking me over. My father, who had sprang to his feet at the first snarl of the dog, seized that Indian and sent him out fully as fast as he had entered and at the same time told the dog to take him, but instantly realizing that that would not do, he yelled at the dog to stop, which he immediately did and let the Indian depart unmolested.

We had no more Indian visitors during the remainder of the winter and spring until the last of April when we were about through maple sugar making when, one morning after breakfast, my mother, who was boss of the sugar making activities although the men did most of the heavy work, told my sister Ruth, who was about two years my senior, and myself to go over to the sugar camp, which was across the Clearwater river, about sixty rods distant, and start the fire under the big pan in which we concentrated the maple sap, which was afterwards cooled, settled and strained into the big iron kettle in which we finished the process by sugaring of, as we termed it.

We had just arrived at the camp and had not yet had time to start the fire when my eyes, always alert, noticed up on the hill among the big maples, two or three Indians coming toward us. I instantly spoke to Ruth that Indians were coming.

Instead of running for home as lots of children of that age would have done, she commenced picking up and dumping into the big kettle which was 10 empty, every dipper, dish and pan that we had in use there except a large dish pan, which she put in upside down covering all the small things in the kettle and then seated herself on top of the dish pan.

Library of Congress

As for myself, I am sorry to say, that the only thing I seemed interested in saving was a little ax which my father had given me back in Illinois. I picked that up and stepping back into the edge of the brush, put it behind me and thus we awaited results.

The two or three Indians that first attracted my attention were the leaders of a band of seventy-one of the time and have not changed my opinion since.

If a man had a moving picture of that lot of savages as they filed by us on that morning, it would be worth a fortune to him.

Ruth sat there on that kettle full of dishes and pans like Patience on a monument, while I stood there striving with all my young might to bow to each individual Indian, as I thought that it was necessary to be polite to them all and as they continued to come thick and fast it became almost impossible for me to bob my head fast enough to do each Indian justice.

One of them stopped and took Ruth by the arm and indicated that he wanted her to vacate her throne but she resisted and stayed there and he went on.

About ten or twelve of the rear ones had no paint on their faces except a plentiful supply of black which I afterward learned indicated that they, being all young, had never been in a battle and were now on their maiden raid against their enemies, the Chippewas.

After the last one had gone by and we could not see any more coming, Ruth and I did not wait to build a fire but followed them over to our home to see what they would do there.

When we arrived at the house, there were a lot of them standing around in the front yard and father was sitting on the steps in front of the door whittling a stick with his jack knife, while Mr. Perry, a neighbor, stood near.

The Indians had been wanting father to feed them which, considering the number, was out of the question.

Library of Congress

One of them, apparently angered by father's refusal to feed them, walked past father and, as he passed, struck towards father's face with the butt of his gun at the same time muttering something which Mr. Perry, who was standing near, understood was nepo, meaning to kill.

My father was wearing at the time a broad brimmed hat and, as he was looking down, did not see the Indian's movement until the musket butt was nearly against his nose. My father was a quick tempered man and was apt to resent any threats or insults instantly and he then did what, under the circumstances, I think was a very injudicious thing. He sprang to his feet and picked up a small stick and started towards the offender 11 and said, "I will whip you, you squaw."

As the young buck made the motion at father with his gun, an older one that stood by spoke sharply to the young one and he got out of the way when father started towards him but if that old Indian had not spoken a tragedy might have been the result.

They all soon resumed their journey and left us in peace.

From that time until the outbreak in August of 1862, when so many people were slaughtered and so much property was destroyed, the Indians, whose summer home was along the Minnesota river, came up into our part of the state to hunt and we used to trade vegetables, sugar and flour and sometimes hay, for venison and tallow, but they behaved themselves and we had no trouble with them and had no fear of them until the August before alluded to. Then we were certainly frightened enough to last us for a while.

Shortly after the outbreak of the Sioux, we had heard and read of the horrible deeds that the Indians had perpetrated on the defenseless settlers off to the southwest of us but as there were no murders committed nearer to us than about thirty miles, and as the troops seemed to be masters of the situation we did not anticipate being disturbed in our part of

Library of Congress

the state so we went about our farming business as though nothing had happened and seemingly in perfect security.

Toward the later part of August, my brother, two years my junior, and myself, were engaged in hauling oats from the field about three fourths of a mile distant from our home. As we neared home with a cart load of sheaves, about four P.M. we were surprised to see our ten year old brother coming toward us, running fast as though he was in a terrible hurry. When we met him he told us to hurry as fast as we could as our folks were afraid that we would all be killed by the Indians.

We had a big load of oats on the cart but they were not bound on with a binding pole as we did not need one. That news woke us up and the way that we laid the gad onto those oxen and the way oat bundles flew right and left as those running oxen took that cart over that stumpy and stony road was certainly a sight to see.

Arriving at the house, we were soon told what had happened to turn a peaceful, pastoral scene into such a turmoil.

A short time previously the folks at the house had heard over east toward our nearest neighbor, a Mr. Herman Knickerbocker's place, somebody shouting as though they were insane and, as the noise came nearer, they saw a man running and he was shouting at the top of his voice. When he came near enough so they could understand what he said they then understood why he was in such a hurry.

He was crying, "Run for your lives, the Chippewas have broken out and have slaughtered all the people up country and have taken and are now burning St. Cloud and will soon be here." Then he turned and ran home.

12

We quickly threw off what remained of the oats and commenced to pile and pack everything movable into that big cart rack.

Library of Congress

"Mounting in hot haste, the steed," wasn't a circumstance to what happened in the vicinity of the Dally domicile within the next hour or two. Everyone, big and little, was engaged in piling and packing everything that could be taken for we fully believed that everything we left would be destroyed by the savages.

I was helping with might and main, when my father suddenly said to me, "Nate, you go and get the cattle." As they, the cattle, were running loose in the woods north of the house, the direction that the Indians were supposed to be coming from, this made me pause. There certainly has been times in my life when I had more enthusiasm for a trip than I felt at that moment but as I had been some what acquainted with my father before and I knew that those cattle had be brought in and that the quicker it was done the less danger there was in doing it, so I went after those cattle in a hurry and had then rounded up in a hurry.

We then yoked up another pair of oxen so that we had two pairs to handle the monster load that we had on that big cart, then hitching the cows behind and letting the young stock follow, we started in the darkness for the town of Clearwater, seven miles distant.

In the van was the two yoke of oxen with my father holding to the left horn of the near pole ox and acting as steersman to guide those oxen and that cart around the crooks and turns of a narrow woods road while I, with my "trusty rifle," as they in the stories, on my shoulder, brought up the rear. I have since learned what I did not know then, that I occupied the post of honor in a retreat.

In after years when I was reading "Prescott's Conquest of Mexico," I came upon that scene that occurred during that sorrowful night of the retreat and it reminded me forcibly of that night when we were fleeing for our lives to the shelter of town.

To be sure, the characters engaged were not strikingly similar as Cortez' armor clad knights who led the van did not bear any great resemblance to two yokes of oxen hitched to a big cart piled high with household goods and surmounted by a tired mother with

Library of Congress

sixteen year old daughter trying to keep about a half dozen children from two years old upward from falling off the rocking cart. Neither did the golden haired Alvarado with his long lance acting as rear guard and jumping the canal where the bridge was broken down much resembled an undersized 14 year old kid with a single barreled muzzle loading rifle on his shoulder trying in the darkness to dodge mud holes that lay in his path but the sorrow for having to leave and the uncertainty of what lay ahead was the same.

Just after starting from home, the sky in the direction of St. Cloud was lit lip by a great glare that convinced us that the report that St. Cloud was being burned was correct.

13

We proceeded without incident until we were out of the heavy timber and had reached the point about half way to Clearwater when we heard a wagon in our rear coming as if the driver was trying to break the record of, or was trying to steal the reputation of that famous son of Nimshi, mentioned in Second Kings, Ninth Chapter. When he overtook us, which he soon did, it proved to be Mr. Orrin Laughton, who was just returning home after he had been out in the woods warning the people, our neighbors, who lived around the eastern part of Clearwater lake, and also those around Pleasant lake, of the impending danger.

When he came up, we halted, and asked him what news was. He said that it was a mistake about the Chippewas having broken out and that St. Cloud was all right but he added that the Chippewas were disaffected and were liable to break out at any time.

When my father heard all that, he was disgusted with himself for being so easily frightened and announced his intention of turning around and returning at once to his home but Mr. K. told him to come on to his home, which was about a mile further on, and spend the night and then he could return in the morning, which we did.

As we were returning the next morning and were passing the house of Mr. Cyrus Smith, a son-in-law of our near neighbor Mr. Octavius Longworth, who, with his family, had also fled during the night to his son-in-law's place, came out and advised my father not to take

Library of Congress

his family back into the woods until things were more settled, so we unloaded a part of our household goods and left my mother and the smaller children at Mr. Smith's and then my father and Melville, my next younger brother, and myself, started on.

When we reached the Wiegand place, a mile farther on, we met the cavalcade from the east end of Clearwater and Pleasant lakes which comprised almost all sorts of conveyances from a wagon to a sled with oxen as a motive power.

Among them was a Moses S. Harriman with his family, consisting of his wife and five children, the youngest of which was Elmer Ellsworth Harriman, who now resides at Los Angeles, California, and writes such entertaining stories for the *Youths Companion* and *American Boy*.

As he was quite young at that time, I did not take much notice of him but did of his sister, Emma L., who was only a little younger than myself.

Well, after holding a debate with then for some time, we resumed our journey and arrived at home in due time and proceeded to collect the oat bundles that we had distributed so liberally along the road the evening before and after having stacked the remainder of the oats we attended to other farm work for three days and then my father announced that he thought we might as well go out to Mr. Smith's and stay there with the rest of the family, which we did.

For a long time I did not know why he had changed his mind, but 14 afterward learned that he had noticed some signs that he thought had been made by Indians and concluded that it was not safe to remain at home.

We stayed a short time at Mr. Smith's and then, as my mother was very anxious to see her brothers and sisters who still resided in Illinois, my father made arrangements with our neighbors to care for our stock and crops while we were gone and after buying and fitting out a boat large enough to accommodate the whole family, we set out down the

Library of Congress

Mississippi river, our destination being Rock Island, Illinois, where we arrived after having a trip that abounded with incidents, some of which were thrilling enough to please anybody. We arrived about a month later and then took the train for Bureau Junction where one of my uncles lived on the farm that my Grandfather Wherry bought when he came to Illinois from Marion County, Ohio, in 1836, and where he and my grandmother lived until their death about 1850.

CHAPTER III A 500 Mile Trip Down the Mississippi River in 1862.

In the autumn of the year 1862, after leaving our home on account of fear of the Indians, we stayed at Mr. Cyrus Smith's place on Clearwater Prairie for about ten days and then, as my mother had been longing for several years to see her brothers and sisters and other relatives who still resided in Illinois, my parents decided to go back there visiting during the next winter and perhaps longer.

Two old settlers of Clearwater, Seth Gibbs and Thomas Tollington, had, during the Indian scare, constructed a boat with which they intended if circumstances compelled them, to float down the river to Minneapolis.

As the danger seemed to be passed, they wished to dispose of their boat so my father bought it and he and I proceeded to put a cabin on it so that it would make a home for the whole family in our trip down the river to Rock Island, Illinois, our destination where we would take the railroad to Bureau Junction, near our old home.

Our boat was of the scow pattern 26 feet in length and 6 1/2 in width.

We cabined in about 16 feet of it leaving 5 feet at each end open except at the bow where the roof ran over the open space where we had a seat for the rowers under cover, but at the stern the steersman stood in the open but as we could steer to a certain extent with the oars it was not necessary for the steersman to keep his post if it rained.

Library of Congress

After making arrangements with some of our neighbors to care for our stock while we were absent, se loaded a lot of household goods on our boat and taking a good supply of potatoes, squashes, and other vegetables to last us on our trip, we started on our 500 mile voyage down the "Father of Waters."

It was late in the afternoon when we got off and evening when we passed the big bend about 3 1/2 miles below Clearwater, our starting point.

Here, the river, at that time, made a big bow to the south and then back again north to a point opposite and then ran to the southeast again. Around the bend it was about one mile and the almost inclosed point, at its base, was only 25 or 30 rods wide.

Along about 1865, in a season of high water in the spring, the river seemed to take a notion to shorten its course and started cutting its way across the base of the point. The U. S. engineers in charge of the upper 16 river came up with a crew of men and endeavored to make it behave by stopping up the cut-off, but the next spring the river asserted its rights to do as it pleased and not only tore out what they had put in but enlarged the gap to such an extent that the engineers gave it up as a bad job and concluded, as a fellow said, "to let 'er rip," which the river continued to do until the whole river passed through the cut-off and then proceeded to silt up its old channel until at the head of the cut-off the old channel was a grove of willows and cottonwoods 15 or 20 acres in extent and the old channel below the cut off was also filling up so that in a few years another of those oxtow lakes would be added to the many that already exist along the course of the river all of the way from the falls of Pokegama to the Gulf of Mexico.

We tied up for the night a short distance below the big bend and next day passed Monticello and camped the second night just above Battle Rapids since called Coon Rapids.

Library of Congress

This Rapids got its first name from an encounter that took place here in an early day between the Sioux Indians and their life long foes, the Chippewas. The story as given by the early settlers ran like this:

Old Hole-in-the-day, Sr., with either one or two of his warriors, came down the river on a scalp hunt and found a party of Sioux encamped on the opposite or west bank of the river at the rapids.

After reconnoitring the Sioux camp, he picked a hiding place in the timber on the east side of the river. The hiding place consisted of a large hollow log in which he and his companions could conceal themselves.

After choosing their lair, they boldly walked out in plain view of their enemies. When the Sioux discovered them all of the Sioux warriors in the camp took to their canoes and paddled over to the east side to wipe out a party of Chippewas who thus dared to be heard in their lair.

When the Sioux took to their canoes, Hole-in-the-day and his companions ran back and hid in their hollow log and as the Sioux were combing the timber and brush for them they slipped out and ran to the canoes of the Sioux and with their hatchets knocked holes in the bottoms of all except one in which they immediately crossed over to the west side and proceeded to slaughter the defenseless women and children and old unarmed men left in the camp when the warriors sallied forth to kill the invaders.

When the Sioux warriors in their fruitless chase heard the screams and yells of their women and children and the triumphant yells of their enemies, they ran back to their landing place only to find their boats gone and a rapid river between them and their loved ones who were being slaughtered by relentless foes. Just how many met death I never learned but doubtless some of them escaped and found hiding places in the timber along the river.

Library of Congress

After camping all night just above the rapids, we resumed our journey 17 and as we ran the rapids our boat struck a large boulder in the bed of the river which projected nearly to the surface but fortunately did no damage.

I think that it was a short distance below Anoka that we met a large scow loaded with freight and merchandise and carrying an immense sail that was driving them along against the swift current. The crew stated that they had left Minneapolis at midnight when a southerly wind sprang up.

We soon arrived at Minneapolis and tied up at the upper levee, just above where two steamboats, the "Enterprise" and the "Cutter" were tied to the west bank of the river.

Shortly after our arrival, I went on board of the steamers and looked them all over, from stem to stern, to see just how they were put together, but at that time I did not dream that I at some future time would build a steamer of my own. If I remember correctly we stayed there two nights while my father was making arrangements to have our house boat hauled around the falls and launched in the river at the lower landing.

While telling about the steamers I forgot to state that the "St. Cloud," a small side wheel steamer was tied up at the head of the island across the channel from the other two which were both stern wheelers.

The river from the lower landing down some distance, was very rapid and we had to be very careful to avoid striking boulders as the water was very low at that time of the year.

We soon passed the historic Fort Snelling which was built on the bluff on the point of land between the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. The corner stone of this Fort was laid Sept. 10th, 1820, and the Fort was named Fort St. Anthony, but the name was afterward changed to Fort Snelling, in honor of Colonel Josiah Snelling, one of the early commanders at the Fort.

Library of Congress

From the Mississippi side, not much of the fort was visible except the historic tower at the southeast angle.

Just as we arrived at the mouth of the Minnesota we met a small steamer, the "Albany", which was running on the Minnesota at that time.

Arriving at St. Paul, we landed as my father had some business to attend to at that place.

Lying at the levee was a large side wheel steamer, the "Northern Light", which was being loaded with down river freight. We ran down the river a few miles and as night was coming on we camped on the west bank of the river. Shortly after darkness fell we heard the "Northern Light" coming down and when she came around the bend above where we were encamped what a beautiful sight she presented.

With every state room aglow with lights and the red and green side lights, high on her upper works near the bow, to us children she was a wonderful picture.

Opposite where we were camped the river was quite shallow, a sand and gravel bar extending nearly, if not all the way across. As she came near us we could hear the engine room bell as the pilot on duty ran his signals to the engineer and his assistant in charge of the big engines on the lower deck, calling for "full speed ahead" on the starboard engine and half speed on the port engine, as he wound his devious way among the bars and shallows, where, if he went wrong, his boat would be aground and then they would have to spar with two monstrous spars that stood on the deck, one at each corner of the upper works, near the bow and which were attached by tackle to two stationary spars so that the movable spars could be handled by the crew with the aid of the donkey engine and thus said a boat over the bar otherwise would be impassable.

As she went past, we could distinctly hear the grinding of her bottom on the gravel of the bar over which she was passing.

Library of Congress

From that time on until we reached Rock Island we saw about all the steamers that were then navigating the upper river, from St. Louis to St. Paul, a great many of which I still remember the names.

The largest boat running on that part of the river was the "War Eagle", the next in size were the "Northern Light," "The Northern Belle" and the "Milwaukee" then came the third in size, in which were the "McLellan", the "Canada", the "Pittsburg" and another boat the J. B. something that I do not now recall. Those in the next class were the "M. M. Pomeroy", the "Zouave" and a number of others that I do not now remember the names of.

All of the above were side wheelers except the "Zouave" which was a stern wheeler.

I think that the handsomest one of the lot was the "Milwaukee" with her three enormous golden beads strong on the "monkey brace" between the two smoke stacks.

The first time that I saw her was six years before when in the autumn of 1856, we crossed the Mississippi at Dunleith, Ill, and Dubuque, Iowa, the "Milwaukee" lay at the levee and those gigantic golden beads shining in the sun looked very attractive to my youthful eyes.

I never heard just how large those beads were but in comparison with the size of the smoke stack I should judge that the center one was about five feet in diameter and the other two about three feet.

Nothing worthy of note was seen until we reached Prairie Island near the old town of Red Wing. On this island the French Explorer LeSueur in 1695 built a fort and on this same Island and on the main land in its vicinity the Honorable Jacob V. Brower, an old friend of mine found and located nearly twelve mounds, cairns and earthworks that had been built in ages long past by an unknown people of whose history we have no record except these earthen monuments, in many of which were deposited the remains of their dead.

Library of Congress

After passing Red Wing, we soon reached Lake Pepin, where our 19 mode of travel, drifting with the swift current of the river, had to be changed as that lake is so deep that there is no apparent movement of the water down stream, and we had to rely on our oars for motive power, but soon tiring of that we attached a long light line called a bed cord in those days, to the side of the boat near the bow and taking the other end to shore, my father and myself and one or two of my younger brother, proceeded to tow the craft and found that where the shore was practicable, we could make better time than by rowing and thus we passed that historic monument of nature, known as "Barn Bluff" and on down the west shore until finally we struck a place where we had to resume our oars and finally reaching Frontenac, where the French in 1727 built Fort Frontenac, and of which Sueur de la Perriere was command at one time.

At the time we were there a gentlemen known as General Gerard had a fine house on the bluff opposite and back of a low point that extended into the lake a short distance in an easterly direction.

On account of adverse winds we lay just above the point for two nights and one day.

It was on the beautiful lawn surrounding General Gerrard's mansion that I, for the first time, saw dahlias growing and blooming. I thought at the time that they were the most beautiful flowers that I had even seen.

Early in the second morning of our stay we were awakened by the violent rolling of our boat in the waves coming down the lake caused by a strong wind from the northwest. We soon pushed off and passed around the point, where, under its shelter, while my mother and sister prepared breakfast, my father and I rigged up a sail made from some bed clothing which we, after we had eaten breakfast, hoisted on a mast that my father had, in anticipation of some such ned, prepared and brought along.

Library of Congress

Well! how we did go after we had cast off! My father at the steering oar at the stern, guided the craft diagonally across to the Wisconsin shore and then keeping a safe distance from shore we sped onward down the lake.

Our little cabin was so full of bedding that was no passage way through it so that a person passing from bow to stern had to pass over the top of the cabin, a feat that my father did not like to attempt as he was not so spry as he had been in his younger days, so I had to perform that feat when my father needed his dinner.

My trip to the stern went all right but as I was returning I some how lost my balance with the rolling and pitching of the boat and came very near taking a header into the lake from the top of the cabin which, luckily for me, I did not do, for if I had I would very probably have stayed there as I could swim but very little and at the speed that we were traveling at the time the boat would have been a long distance away before I would have risen to the surface after a dive from the top of that cabin.

We ran through the lake and down the river before night came on, having traveled about fifty-five miles during that day, and having passed 20 many historic places among them the site of Fort St. Antoine, on the Wisconsin shore and another fort built on the Minnesota side near the foot of Lake Pepin about 1690 by the French Commander Nicholas Perrot.

We also passed Maiden Rock where, according to Indian Legend, a beautiful Indian maiden, who being compelled to accept as a husband a warrior whom she did not love, cast herself to destruction.

We camped all night a short distance from the mouth of the Chippawa River and the next morning we passed a large steamer aground at the mouth of that stream where she has stuck during the night.

Library of Congress

We then passed the town of Wabashaw, named in honor of a noted chief of the Sioux nation.

I do not remember the different towns that we passed through, but I do remember a place called "Bad Axe", where "Chief Blackhawk" and his allies met defeat at the hands of General Atkinson and his army.

I also remember Winona, named after the Sioux maiden who leaped to her death rather than accept a husband that she did not want.

As we neared Dubuque, we entered the lead region where we saw "Pig" lead ricked up in piles like cord wood, on the river bank, awaiting shipment to market.

At Dubuque was a tall tower said to be 150 feet in height, where they manufactured "drop shot" by pouring melted lead through sieves and letting it drop into a tank of cold water at the surface of the earth 150 feet below.

The hot lead, in falling, would assume a globular form and by the time it struck the water it would be solidified so that it would retain its shape.

The different sizes were then separated by screening.

We were detained a great deal by southerly winds and we would have to lie up occasionally on account of them, but I improved those times by hunting the many wild ducks that fed in the bayous that were plentifully scattered over the wide bottom land through which the great river meandered its course.

I remember that, on one occasion when the wind was blowing hard up stream, that we took a side channel in order that the wind would not interfere with our progress so much.

We entered the channel during the afternoon and expected to emerge soon into the main river but evening came and we were still in that narrow channel and we became

Library of Congress

apprehensive lest the channel would again divide and become so small that we would be compelled to return to where we had left the main river. Night came on and we had not emerged, so we camped for the night and in the morning resumed our journey down stream. Along about ten o'clock, we were greatly relieved, to emerge again upon the main channel.

It was a great outing trip but we became tired of it and were glad when we neared Rock Island where we were to leave the river and take the rail road.

21

When we reached the rapids, just above Rock Island, we met a large scow coming up the rapids under a huge sail, and as there was a strong up river wind blowing, that scow was tearing along, the water flying from her bows at a great rate.

We passed down the east side of the Island. The wing dam that supplied power for the John Deere Agricultural Machinery factory, extending up the river diagonally, and only closing a portion of the east channel.

At that time there still stood, on the Island, a "Block House" that the United States Government had built, in an early day, as a defence against the Indians.

It was a two story building, built of hewn timbers and as near as I could guess, was about thirty feet square, and the second story was placed upon the first in such a manner that the walls of the second story faced the corners of the first story, and all the walls were loop holed for musketry, so that the two stories commanded eight different directions.

As we passed along my father pointed out to us children the residence of Colonel Davenport, for whom the City of Davenport was named.

He was one of the early settlers and lived on the island in the early days, and was so inhumanly tortured by bandits that he died from his injuries a short time later.

Library of Congress

It happened on the Fourth of July, about 1835. His family had gone to a celebration, leaving him at home alone, and the robbers came to his house to rob and, not finding as much money as they thought he possessed, they proceeded to torture him to make him disclose its hiding place.

In those days there was no banks in that part of the country and anyone having any money would hide it in some secret place, known only to themselves or their families, and at that time Northern Illinois was infested by an organized gang of thieves and murderers, called the "Bandits of the Prairies" who made life miserable for the honest people of the country.

They had their active members who traveled around through the country, while the local members, in almost every community, who kept them informed as to the habits of persons who had either horses or money that could be stolen.

They did not make a business of killing people unless resistance was offered or they were thwarted in their plans, then they did not scruple at murder.

They set the law at defiance as they could always furnish an alibi and finally, the honest element, banded together in "Vigilance Committees" which finally succeeded in ridding the country of them by hanging, shooting and whipping.

Three murderers were hung, two others accused of murder were shot for the murder of the man whom they had threatened to kill, but who was really killed by a son and brother of the men executed.

My father was working in the vicinity where these last two were shot and he heard the guns of the firing party that dealt death to John Driscoll and his son William, but it was found out afterward that it was Dave Driscoll, another son, who did the shooting but he left the country and escaped.

Library of Congress

When we reached Rock Island father tried to sell the house boat but no body seemed anxious to buy so he finally traded it off for an old rifle. So we boarded the cars and soon were with relatives where we stayed until the next spring, when we returned to Rock Island and waited for the first steamboat up the river.

We only had to wait a couple of days when a small steamer, the "Durand," commanded by a Captain Pierce, came along and we took passage on it and we had a very pleasant voyage up to Wabashaw, the destination of the "Durand", as she was intending to run on the Chippewa and Mississippi rivers between Durand, Wisconsin, and Wabashaw, Minnesota.

We staid at Wabashaw about a week waiting for the ice in Lake Pepin to get soft enough so that a boat could break its way through.

Finally the "Canada," a medium sized side wheeler, came along and we boarded her and she ran up into the lake and her captain did not like the looks of things so he returned to Wabashaw and had just tied up when we heard a whistle and saw another boat, the "McLellan," come around the bend.

She was heavily loaded and had a heavy list to starbord, caused by not having her freight stowed properly.

She came on up and ran along side of the "Canada" and we transferred over to her and she steamed up into the lake and commenced to buck her way through the ice.

The ice was so stiff that she did not dare to run directly though it, but would run in, then back out, and run in again, a little to one side of her course, then back out and run in again, still farther to one side. So that she broke a trail about three times her width. So she kept at it until darkness fell when they quit for the night.

Library of Congress

That night it froze quite hard and in the morning it looked as though we were elected to stay there a while.

The captain walked across the ice to the Wisconsin shore and ascended a high bluff to view the situation up the lake.

While he was gone the crew busied themselves cutting up two inch oak bucket plank into pieces about two and one-half feet long and spiking them on the sides of the boat vertically to prevent the ice cutting through the regular planking.

When the captain returned about 9:30 A. M. they resumed the ice bucking but in a short time they backed into the ice too far and split the rudder post so that they were disabled for any more ice bucking until they could make a new rudder out of the old one.

While they were engaged at that we saw the "Milwaukee" that had passed the winter above the lake, coming down plowing her way through the ice. At about the same time we saw the "Pittsburg" coming up the lake in our wake.

The "Pittsburg" had a lot of heavy chain draped over her bows which hung down in front and protected her planking from injury and she was steaming right along, smashing her way through any trouble whatever.

When she came up she stopped a short distance away and the "Milwaukee" arriving at the same time, the three boats lay a few rods apart, while the captains conferred for a few minutes, and then the "Pittsburg" started up the lake and the "Milwaukee" down and then our boat the "McLellan" followed the "Pittsburg". Our pilot steering our boat by signals to the engineers it kept the assistant engineers "humping" themselves to answer all the signals that the pilot rang for them, and just before we arrived at Red Wing one of them threw a lever wrong and broke a lever on a rocker shaft so we had to stop for an hour or more at Red Wing while they repaired that and also the rudder. Then they resumed their course to St. Paul, where we arrived in the morning, and during the day we went by train

Library of Congress

to Minneapolis, where father hired a team to take us to Clearwater, where we arrived in due time. Thus ending a trip during which we probably travelled twelve or thirteen hundred miles, as the Mississippi has an awful lot of crooks and kinks in it between Clearwater and Rock Island, Ill.

CHAPTER IV When I Nearly Met Two Hostile Sioux Indians, Little Crow and his son, in the Spring of 1863

We had returned from Illinois where we had spent the winter following the Sioux Indian outbreak of 1862.

After putting in our crop, as there was not much to keep me busy until haying began, my folks thought that I might as well dig ginseng for a while as it was bringing about ten cents per pound green, whereas it had been selling for three or four cents per pound before that time.

The ginseng plant formerly grew in vast quantities throughout the "big woods" in Wright, Meeker, McLeod and other counties of Minnesota.

To those who have never seen it, I would say that it somewhat resembles wild sarsaparilla, but differs in several particulars from it, as ginseng has five leaflets to each section of its ternate leaf, instead of three as in sarsaparilla, and also the seed stalk is at the top of the stem in the axil of the ternate leaves instead of a separate leaf stalk. The berries of ginseng are a bright scarlet in a single umbel instead of black in three umbels as in sarsaparilla.

As there was very little ginseng near our farm, I went to board with a neighbor, Mr. Charles Gordon, who lived about one and one-fourth miles southeast of our place and was engaged in digging ginseng, after he had put in his crop.

Library of Congress

One day, about the twentieth of June, we were digging in the woods between Cedar and Sugar lakes in the Township of Corrinna, Wright County, about two and one half miles east of where the town of Annandale now stands. Along about ten A. M., we came upon a newly made trail running in a westerly direction and as it held a remarkably straight course, I remarked to Gordon that I guessed that somebody's stock that had been removed from their old home were making a Bee line for it.

As it was a hot day and th weeds and leaves trampled down in the trail were not wilted, we thought that the animals had passed only a short time previously, possibly only a few minutes before.

When we returned to the house in the evening, we then found out what had made the trail seen by us during the day. A ginseng buyer named Robert Holmes had passed during the afternoon and reported that Mr. 25 Henry Ferguson, who lived some five or six miles east had been robbed of his two horses by some hostile Indians and that they were striking west with a posse of settlers in pursuit and that he, Holmes, was on his way to alarm the settlers in advance of the Indians' presence.

He stopped for the night at N. J. Robinson's, a local Baptist minister's house and after supper the Elder and he, mounted on the Elder's ponies, started for Fairhaven four miles distant to notify the squad of soldiers quartered there of the presence of the Indians, that they might head them off.

The Elder and Holmes had made about one half the distance to town, when, as they were passing what was known as the Montgomery marsh, suddenly out of the darkness in front, at the side of the road came the flash and sharp crack of a gun cap, only a short distance off.

As good luck would have it the Indian's gun missed fire, otherwise the elder who was in advance, would undoubtedly have received its contents at only a few yards distance.

Library of Congress

At the flash of the cap, the Elder instantly realized the situation and was equal to it. He instantly shouted at the top of his voice, "Come on Boys, here they are", and wheeled his pony and struck out for home at its best speed. Holmes followed his example, or rather, anticipated it as he best the Elder home by a comfortable margin.

When they arrived at home and reported what had occurred, some of the young men took a row boat and went up the river to town and reported the affair.

The next morning, a party of settlers, including M. S. Harriman, the father of E. E. Harriman, who at the present time (1928) writes stories for the Youth's Companion, went to the scene of the encounter of the evening before and there found that the Indians had been encamped for the night and had been routed out by the Elder and Holmes and had been so frightened that they had left a part of their equipment including a war sack in which was a piece of birch bark with the figures of animals and signs engraved upon it.

The posse pursued them and at one time came within sight of them but could not overtake them as the two Indians had the horses and in open ground could make better time than their pursuers, who were on foot, so the settlers returned home when the soldiers, ten in number, under Captain Cady, took up the trail. The soldiers overtook them and in the encounter that ensued Captain Cady was killed and the Indians escapes but left the horses so that Ferguson finally recovered his team.

While I was in Annandale on a visit two years ago, I fell in with George Ferguson, a son of Henry Ferguson, and he informed me that Isaac Carter, a neighbor of theirs who was with the Sibley expedition against the Sioux in the summer of 1863, that when Little Crow's son was captured by Sibley's troops, he, the son, told Carter that it was he and his father, Little Crow, that took Ferguson's horses, he taking them while his father, Little Crow, stood with his rifle leveled at Ferguson's door with the intention of shooting any person appearing there.

Library of Congress

When the news spread, which it quickly did, the people around Clearwater Lake, and also around Pleasant Lake, immediately got into action. Those around Pleasant lake partly built a stockade on the southeast shore of the lake, where they stayed for a short time, and then they concluded that it would be safer to follow the example of the rest of us and go to the prairie near the village of Clearwater, where they remained until they thought the danger was passed.

We moved out to Mr. James Lee's place, as he and his wife were near friends of my father and mother.

The settlers would return to their farms occasionally to work a portion of the day and then return with a supply of vegetables for their families in the evening.

One evening as my father and I were returning from a visit to our farm and were near Mr. Lee's place, in the stillness of the evening we heard two shots in quick succession, off to the south-east.

We supposed that it was some hunter shooting at deer but the next morning we heard that a Mr. Kinney, while returning from his farm, had been shot and wounded by an Indian.

He and his wife had gone out with their ox team and wagon to their farm and were returning in the evening and as they were passing a piece of ground that was covered with high grass and willow brush, their dog which had accompanied them, began to bark at something in a bunch of willows a few rods distant.

Kinney stopped his team and picking up his gun arose and was trying to see what his dog was barking at.

Suddenly an Indian arose from the willows and before Kinney could do anything aimed and fired at him, breaking his arm above the elbow and the impact of the shot threw him off his balance and he fell out of the wagon.

Library of Congress

At the same time another Indian arose and shot an arrow at the dog but failed to hit him. Kinney managed to get back into the wagon and his wife put the whip to the oxen and soon put a safe distance between themselves and the Indians who did not pursue them.

I do not think that the Indians would have interfered with Kinney if the dog had not discovered them. I think that they heard the team coming and were lying in wait to see whether it was a horse team or not. I have always believed if Kinney had been driving a horse team that he and his wife would have both been killed as after events proved that it was horses that the Indians wanted.

The same evening that Kinney was shot, two men named Pratt and Jordan were putting up hay in the vicinity and as they were busy at work they heard talking and naturally listened. As Pratt knew some of the 27 Sioux language he instantly knew that the persons conversing were Indians and as they were very near where he and Jordan had left their rifles before commencing work, he did not think it safe to try to get them then, so he and Jordan took a sneak into a thicket of young tamarack that bordered the meadow where they were at work and stayed there until the Indians had passed on, when they recovered their rifles which the Indians had not noticed as they passed by.

Next day a party of men, of which my father was one, went after the Indians who had shot Kinney and tried to trail them but could not do much, as they did not leave enough trail to do anything in that line, and the only excitement they had was when the leader stirred up a yellow jackets' nest and those following got the benefit of their stings.

About the same time of the foregoing occurrence a German settler near the northeast side of Main Prairie had lost his team by Indians taking it during the night.

Instead of striking west, as the other Indians had done, the three who took the German's horses struck southeast and came down near our place, and as near as I can learn,

Library of Congress

crossed the Clearwater river about one-half mile below our place and striking into the heavy timber east of where we lived.

William Longworth, a young man 19 years of age, son of one of our near neighbors and his sister Mary, and two men and their wives had come out to the Longworth farm and, as there was such a large party of them, they concluded to spend the night there.

I think that one of the main inducements for remaining all night was that Will had discovered that deer had been in their field during the preceding nights and as they were liable to continue feeding until after day light in the morning, a hunter getting out in the early morning stood a good chance of having choice venison steak for a while.

After passing the night undisturbed, Will, as soon as it was light enough to see a short distance, started for their field some sixty rods distant.

The road that led to the field passed through heavy maple timber and occasionally a thicket of young hickory and other young timber. Before he emerged from one of these thickets, he paused to scan the field for deer.

As he was intently looking over the field for deer, his hunter's eye, always on the alert, caught a movement of something among the trees to his left. He instantly glanced in that direction and what he saw fairly made his hair bristle.

One of the largest Indians that he had ever seen was sneaking along with his gun at ready, looking in the direction where Will would have been if he had not stopped to survey the field for deer.

What was best to do, Will did not know. He knew that the single barrel muzzle loading rifle which he carried, was not sure fire as it often missed fire, and he knew that if it missed fire, as close as that Indian was, 28 his own death was almost certain. He knew from the Indian's actions that he did not know just where Will was and he concluded that the safest

Library of Congress

course for him to pursue was to retreat to the house for reinforcements, so he clasped his powder horn and bullet pouch to his side to prevent them from making a noise, then he crouched down, turned and took a sneak for the house and gave the alarm and with the other two men returned, but they could not find the Indian as he also had left the locality.

Upon going to the barn, which stood about fifteen rods from the house, they were astounded to find that the Indians had been occupying it during the night while they had been sleeping peacefully in the house only fifteen rods away.

The next that was heard of the Indians was over in the Township of Albion, some seven or eight miles south.

A man named Hart was out in the woods hunting and was watching some honey bees, in order to find their home tree, when he heard somebody talking and as he looked to see who it was he was greatly surprised to see three Indians with two horses coming toward him.

He had a double gun, one barrel for fine shot and the other a rifle but the shot barrel was out of order so that he only had the rifle to depend on.

The Indians were only about twelve rods distant and the leading Indian, a large man, had his blanket over his shoulder, leaving his broad breast bare, presenting a fine mark.

Hart said that he drew a bead on the center and pulled the trigger.

At the crack of the gun, Hart said that he saw the bullet hole open on the Indians breast, right where he had aimed.

I do not doubt his statement, as I have seen the same thing happen when I have shot deer under like circumstances.

When the bullet struck him, he went down, as also did the others.

Library of Congress

As Hart's gun was a muzzle loader, he beat a retreat before the two remaining Indians could crawl upon him.

He went and gave the alarm and a party went with him to the scene of the encounter, and they found the place where the vegetation was wallowed down and plenty of blood but no dead Indian, but, judging from the amount of basswood bark that had been peeled it looked as though one of their number had been tied on a horse with it.

The party took up the trail which finally lead along the shore of a small lake, where the Indians had walked in the water for some distance.

The pursuing party finally overhauled the Indians and routed them from their camp and in that camp they had left, in their hurry, a bloody blanket, a gun and the equipment of one Indian, but they did not have the third man with them, either dead or alive. I have always thought that they sunk the dead man in that pond that they passed through the edge of.

The pursuing party, not being able to keep up with the Indians who could make better time riding the horses when the conditions were favorable, 29 returned, when a squad of ten Cavalrymen took up the chase.

The Cavalrymen did not come up with them until the Indians had reached the big, open prairie, and it seems that the Indians had thought themselves safe from pursuit and out of danger as they had halted and lain down on the ground and were letting the horses graze when the soldiers sighted them and maneuvered for a surprise, which they carried into effect so completely that the Indians did not have time to mount before the troops were upon them. But they fought like heroes and the troops had to acknowledge that, had the numbers been equal, the issue would have been extremely doubtful.

Library of Congress

The troops were armed with breech loading carbines of the Smith patent, which used a rubber shell with a small hole in the back end for the fire from the fulminate which was contained in a cap which fitted on a tube like a common gun.

Those rubber cartridges, in unfavorable weather, would absorb dampness and on occasion, were nearly worthless and as the Cavalrymen had discarded their sabers, thinking that they would have no use for them in fighting Indians, they had to depend on their Carbines, which finally, in the end, they used as clubs.

The Indians were both armed with muzzle loading shot guns which, the troopers said, were loaded and fired as fast as the soldiers could fire their breech loaders. None of the soldiers were killed but if I remember correctly, there were four wounded and they had two horses killed and other horses wounded.

About the same time of the occurrence that I have just related, a man named James McGannon left Kingston, Meeker County, bound for Fairhaven, Stearns County, about sixteen miles distant by the mail route.

Some time after his departure, his horse returned to Kingston, riderless. Why somebody did not take the trouble to investigate his sudden disappearance I never could learn.

A short time afterwards the mail carrier who carried the mail between Fairhaven and Kingston, on his return trip to Fairhaven, reported that near the Wright and Meeker county line, about half way on his route, he had noticed a terrible stench as though some animal was decaying not far from the highway.

Having heard of the disappearance of McGannon, a party returned to the spot and found his decaying body which they buried where it lay, a few feet from the road. The body was afterwards disinterred and buried about six rods east of the spot where he was first buried,

Library of Congress

and was placed at the foot of an oak tree on which was placed a board with his name and date of death.

It was reported that his remains were afterward removed to the Cemetery at Fairhaven, but I have grave doubts as to the truth of the report as the last time I saw his grave in the autumn of 1868, five years after his death there were no indications that the body had been removed.

When his body was first found, it indicated that he had been shot from his horse as he was peacefully riding along. Some of his clothing and his watch were missing, but who the assassins were was a mystery for some time.

Shortly after the above occurrence a Mr. Lamson, residing about seven miles northwest of Hutchinson had returned with one of his sons to his farm and as they needed some meat, they concluded to go out and get, if they could, "a wild sheep," as settlers in those days termed certain animals of the deer kind, which it was not lawful to slay except at certain seasons of the year.

They both were armed with muzzle loading rifles, the father's gun carrying a slightly smaller bullet than the son's.

In those times, we made our own bullets from bar lead which all the stores kept in stock, with gun powder, fine shot, buck shot and gun caps of different sizes.

As they were preparing to start on their hunt, they had put their ammunition out on the table and young Lamson forgot to take his bullets and his father took all the bullets and got them mixed.

As they were sneaking noiselessly along an old road that ran through the forest, they suddenly heard a human voice and the elder Lamson, who was in advance, stopped and

Library of Congress

looked to see who was there and was surprised to see two Indians busily engaged in picking berries.

Knowing that they must be hostile Sioux, he instantly raised his gun and drew on one of them and fired. The Indian did not fall, but turned and brought his gun to his breast and stood looking for his assailant.

Young Lamson took aim at the Indian's breast and fired, upon which the Indian fell to the ground. Then both the Lamsons dropped and started to crawl for cover.

The elder Lamson was wearing a white shirt which made him quite conspicuous and the other Indian, catching sight of him as he was worming his way through the bushes, turned loose a charge of buck shot at the white shirt, one of which plowed its way through the top of the elder man's shoulder.

Realizing that a white shirt put him at a disadvantage, he pulled it off and left it. He then proceeded to reload his rifle and by mistake put one of his son's large bullets in his gun, where it stuck in the muzzle and he could neither get it up or down.

The younger Lamson had sneaked in a different direction from that taken by his father and, as soon as he reached sufficient, cover, proceeded to reload his gun, and after charging it with powder he discovered that he had no bullets, so he struck out for home to get aid.

The elder Lamson lay hid where he was until towards evening and heard the Indians conversing for some time and finally all was still.

31

The younger Lamson got some others to go with him and they returned to the scene of the encounter and found the dead of the Indian they had shot and then proceeded to find his father who had not showed up yet.

Library of Congress

Taking his trail into the thicket he had entered, they found the discarded white shirt which was all bloody and some of the men thought he had been killed but his son examined the shirt carefully and pointed out that there were only two holes in the shirt a short distance apart, where the single buck shot had entered and emerged so he knew that his father was not dangerously wounded.

They returned home and during the night the elder Lamson arrived and they said he was certainly a sight to behold, for in addition to the wound that the Indian had given him his body above the waist was all scratched up by the prickly Ash and other thorns that he had encountered while wending his way in the darkness of the night to his home.

They took the body of the dead Indian to the town of Hutchinson and there somebody recognized it as the body of the Sioux Chief, "Little Crow" who had been one of the leaders in the outbreak the previous year.

One of Mr. Lamson's sons, J. B. Lamson, lived a neighbor to me in the town of South Side, Wright County, Minnesota, and he gave me the facts in regard to the killing of "Little Crow" by his father and brother in the summer of 1863.

"Little Crow's" son, after talking with his father, put a new pair of moccasins on his father's feet before he left him, presumably to help him on his way to the "Happy Hunting Grounds".

During the early autumn of 1863, a party of troopers belonging to General Sibley's expedition, returning from the Missouri River, where they had driven the hostile Sioux, while on a scout in the vicinity of Devils Lake early one morning, heard a single shot and riding in the direction from which the sound came, they discovered a young Indian alone, who surrendered without resistance.

He was, when the troopers found him, engaged in skinning a coyote that he had just shot, having watched at the den where he had seen the coyote enter three days before and he

Library of Congress

had used his last charge of ammunition in killing it as he had been in a starving condition for some days, consequently he was not in very good shape to put up a fight.

He was wearing the coat and had the watch taken from the body of McGannon, an account of whose death I have related in this chapter. He also had his father's, "Little Crow's", rifle, the butt stock of which showed the place where young Lamson's rifle bullet struck it just before giving "Little Crow" his second fatal wound.

He told the troopers that his father and he shot McGannon from his horse but the animal became so frightened that they could not catch it, although the horse was all they wanted.

The death of "Little Crow" and others of the raiders and their inability to get away with what horses they did take seemed to dampen the ardor of others so they did not resume their operations the next year as many people were afraid they would.

In addition to their taking horses, they also shot cattle, whether they wanted meat or did it for pure devilment. I do not know. They shot and mortally wounded an ox belonging to one of our neighbors, a Mr. Levi Dakin, and another neighbor, M. S. Harriman, had two steers shot, but they both recovered.

Another neighbor, Mr. Nicholas Zeigler, found a steel pointed arrow sticking through the upper part of the shoulders of a yearling steer belonging to him. He pulled out the arrow and kept it as a memento of the troublous times we all experienced in those early days.

CHAPTER V Some Indian Fights

As I have stated previously, we saw but few Indians during the winter of 1856-7 as they were not camped near us that winter, but were camped at Maine Prairie, eight or ten miles distant and also over north of us some three or four miles.

Library of Congress

There had been war between the Sioux and Chippewas for about two hundred years or more, except for short periods when the old men of the two tribes, seeing the futility of this constant warfare, would prevail on the younger members to make peace.

Those peace-making parties were generally held in the autumn or in early winter, so that the two tribes hunt on the same hunting grounds which they both wished to do.

As long as the snow lasted in the spring the peace lasted but as soon as soon as the snow went the peace vanished with it.

They made a peace of that kind the winter of 1857, if I remember correctly, but that next spring a party of Chippewas numbering about one hundred and fifty, made a raid on the Sioux, near Shakopee, in which each party lost several killed and wounded.

The next fall the Sioux, on their annual hunt, encamped near Maine Prairie before the snow came and were hunting in that vicinity.

At the same time four Chippewas were in that vicinity, bent on getting some Sioux scalps.

A settler, name Akin, who at that time resided near the scene of action, gave us an account of what happened shortly after it occurred.

One of the Chippewas, while scouting around, encountered a lone Sioux and shot him, wounding him in such a manner that he was not killed but was disabled so that he could not defend himself.

The Chippewa then, in his tenderheartedness, did not finish him but just took off his scalp and cut off both his hands and left him to enjoy himself. The Sioux' comrades finding one of their number in such a pleasant plight at once knew that it was Chippewas who had done the deed and at once proceeded to hunt them out.

Library of Congress

The Chippewas, to more easily escape their enemies, separated and each one exerted himself both mentally and physically to save his scalp.

One of them with four dogs and eight Sioux after him, in order to escape them, swam the narrows of Cornelian lake and made for the home of James Simmons, with whom he was acquainted, and asked Simmons to save him, which he proceeded to do, for when the Sioux with their dogs trailed the Chippewa up to his door, he refused to let them in and as he was armed with a gun and his hired man with a pitchfork, the Sioux did not press the matter but departed. Under the circumstances it is a wonder that they did not kill all hands to get that Chippewa.

Another one of the Chippewas was shot through the side, a flesh wound but escaped and afterward came to Simmons who hid him in his granary for a short time and then took both of them to St. Cloud with his team so they returned home.

Another one of the four Chippewa whose name was Frank Mu-ked-no-quet (Black Cloud) was not so fortunate. He came running to the home of a Mr. Dickson and implored them to take him in for fear of the Sioux who were close at his heels, firing at him as they came, a large party of them. With the blood running in streams from his numerous wounds he made his last stand by the Dickson house but they soon surrounded the house and finished him.

They then stripped off some of his clothing and threw it on a heap of brush and left it there. Then they took his body and built a big fire and burned it a few rods from Mr. Dickson's gate. Akin said that he afterwards examined the coat and he said that there were about forty bullet holes in it.

I forgot to state that the hands that the kind hearted Chippewa had trimmed off from the disabled Sioux were left in the public road and a man driving along noticed them and

Library of Congress

thought he had found a pair of gloves but when he picked them up he discovered his mistake.

What became of the fourth Chippewa I never learned but he probably escaped.

The spring of 1860, after the snow had gone off, a party of ten Sioux came up to Maine Prairie and stopped at a blacksmith shop and had a gun repaired and while there stated that they were going up into the Chippewa country to get some scalps. After having the gun repaired they proceeded on their way and went up to near Crow Wing where they crossed the Mississippi and going to where Hole-in-the-Day, Sr., was buried they dug up his remains and burned them. While doing so an Indian girl observed them but she escaped by swimming and gave the alarm to Hole-in-the-Day, the younger, head chief of the Chippewas.

The Sioux, after venting their spite on old Hole-in-the-Day's bones, proceeded down the east bank of the Mississippi to Watab. There they tried to get the ferryman to take them over to the west bank on his ferry boat. He, knowing that Hole-in-the-Day, the younger, with twelve warriors, was awaiting them on the west bank and not wishing his ferry boat to be the scene of the battle between thirteen enraged Chippewas and ten 35 Sioux, declined to do so. The Sioux camped at Watab on the east side and during the night stole two boats from private parties and crossed the river in the darkness. After landing, they turned the boats loose to float off down the river. Hole-in-the-Day and his twelve warriors had encamped on the west side and did not know of the Sioux crossing until the next morning when learning that their foes had escaped them, they immediately took up the trail.

The returning Sioux had reached Maine Prairie without being overhauled and consequently became careless. They came to the home of Mr. Daniel Spaulding who was one of the earliest settlers on Maine Prairie and a great friend of my father's.

The men of the Spaulding household were in the field busily engaged in seeding grain and the women of the house shut the door and would not let the Indians in so, after standing

Library of Congress

around a while they went on but took with them a part of a sack of corn meal and also a pair of shoes that belonged to a hired man. The shoes and meal were in the porch outside the house. If those Sioux could have looked into the future a few hours and could have seen to what use that sack that contained that meal was to be put, I do not think that they would have taken it.

While the Sioux were at Mr. S's, a Mrs. Albert Greely who lived about a mile west of Mr. S's, saw a party of Indians running from thicket to thicket on the west side of the prairie but as she had also seen those at Mr. S's house, she thought they were a part of the same gang.

A few hours later the folks at Mr. Spaulding's saw what they thought were the same bunch of Indians coming back but when they came near they noticed that there were thirteen of them instead of ten.

After the Sioux had left Mr. Spaulding's, the men came to the house for supper and the Rev. Mr. Bartley Blaine was also there. As the thirteen Indians came up one of them was walking lame as though one of his legs hurt him.

They came on into the yard and stopped. One of them had the meal sack over his shoulder and the folks noticed that it had something in it in place of the meal and one of them asked the Indian what it was.

He replied by removing the sack from his shoulder and taking it by the bottom, he emptied the contents on the ground and it proved to be a recently severed head of an Indian and three fresh bloody scalps. The white people were horrified but the Indians considered it a good joke and laughed accordingly.

Those Indians that Mrs. Greely saw running down the west side of the prairie were Hole-in-the-Day and his men getting in ahead of the Sioux to ambush them as they came along,

Library of Congress

which they succeeded in doing, and as the unsuspecting Sioux came along, they poured a volley at them at about ten yards distance.

To anyone not acquainted with the Indian character, it would appear 36 strange that any of the Sioux escaped death with thirteen men firing at a distance of ten yards, as it would seem almost inevitable that they would all be killed and they certainly would have been if those thirteen had been cool headed white hunters. My experience with Indians, and I have been acquainted with them for about seventy five years, has taught me that they are nearly all very excitable. No one that is acquainted with them can doubt their courage and their ability to stand torture is proverbial, but they are of such a nature that they get rattled easily.

When the Chippewas delivered their volley, three Sioux went down killed instantly and a fourth, who had received a bullet in his thigh severing the main artery, ran about ten rods and fell dead and two or three others were wounded. One Sioux it seems was wearing the shoes stolen from Spaulding's but it seems that he did not like their fit as he left them a short distance from where his dead comrades lay. One of the shoes had a bullet hole in it and also some blood, showing that the wearer probably found it painful traveling on his way to the Minnesota River where he lived.

Mr. Spaulding and a neighbor, Squire Farwell, were only a short distance from the scene when it occurred in fact some of the stray bullets went over their heads. Some of the Sioux fired back into the thicket in which the Chippewas were concealed and one Chippewa received a ball in the thigh causing him to limp in his walk.

After things had quieted down, a party of men went and placed the dead bodies together and covered them with earth and a few days later a party of Sioux from the Minnesota River appeared on the scene and dug up and carefully washed the dead bodies of their comrades and buried them properly, and so ended that Sioux raid just as the raids of either side often ended.

My father had for years a brass butt plate which came off of one of the guns that were broken and left by the Chippewas at the scene of the slaughter.

When the victorious Chippewas with their ghastly trophies reached Sauk Rapids on their return journey, they stayed all night at that place, Hole-in-the-Day, Jr., stopping at a hotel. When he was assigned a room, he took the sack with its contents with him, not caring to trust it out of his sight. In the morning he took the stage for Crow Wing but before starting he brought out the sack on the hotel porch and, taking out the head, deftly removed the scalp and then kicked the head into the street whence it was rescued by a doctor who preserved it in alcohol.

The ambushade was near the south side of Maine Prairie and on the trail that led down south to Kimball Prairie. Those old trails were well known to those Chippewas and Sioux and this knowledge enabled the Chippewas to chose the location for their ambushade.

CHAPTER VI The Last Indian Raid in Southside Township, Wright County, Minnesota

To a person not conversant with the Sioux Indian's manner of life, a description of some of it might be interesting.

Those that came up into our part of the state in the autumn or early winter had their summer homes on the Minnesota River near Fort Ridgley. They numbered about 300 or more and comprised a part of two bands, Little Crow's and Black Dog's, so the report was.

A good many of them had ponies with travois to carry their camp equipment and the smaller children on. The travois were generally made of two long light poles sixteen feet or more in length and two inches in diameter at the butt end which slid on the ground behind the pony while the small ends were attached to a sort of saddle girthed to the pony's back.

Library of Congress

At the back end, the poles were about five feet apart and about the middle of the long poles some cross pieces were lashed, on which the baggage was placed and lashed securely and on which a place was arranged for the small children to ride.

With that rig they could go almost anywhere that a pony could go, over logs and brush, unless it was too large. The women always led the ponies and when they came to a stream they did not ride but waded right through with the pony and travois following.

Their tents, or tepees in which they lived were round and conical, about sixteen feet in diameter and were stretched over a number of light poles, about sixteen feet long and fastened together at the top and spaced about three feet apart in a circle at the bottom.

At the top of the tent one of the seams was left open for four or five feet and flap of the canvas was left loose and an extra pole on the outside of the tent was fastened to the corner of this flap so that it could be stretched up in such a manner as to form an opening for the smoke to escape from the fire which was built in the center of the tepee below.

Above the fire about six feet was a small platform made of small poles attached to the main side poles and on this platform was placed their meat to dry, or "jerk", as the whites called it.

All around the fire was a layer of dry slough grass which the women cut in the marshes with their knives. Upon this grass was placed their blankets and there they slept.

38

That sight was enough for those two kids so they put the gad to those oxen and struck for home as fast as they could go, but halted at M. S. Harriman's long enough to tell him what they had seen.

Before the excited kid had finished his story, my father had his plans laid to trap that Indian and said to me:

Library of Congress

"Nate, take your gun and go down to Harriman's and get him and go down to the lake and follow up the shore until you strike the trail, and follow it up thru the woods, and I will go down to Warner's and get him and go down thru the woods and head him off if we can.

By this time we both had our guns and bullet pouches and were starting when my mother had something to offer:

"If you two are going to take both guns and leave me nothing to defend myself and all these children, I am going down to Harriman's with Nate." "All right," my father replied and was off as though he was going fishing.

Mother and us kids hurried down to Mr. Harriman's but he was not there and had gone to Elder Robinson's to get Jimmie Robinson's rifle as Jimmie was visiting the school taught by Emma Harriman, who was Jimmie's sweetheart. They were expecting Mr. Harriman's return any minute and were also expecting Emma and Jimmie.

Pretty soon they all came and then we learned what had detained Mr. Harriman so long. When he arrived at Elder Robinson's he learned that Jimmie's rifle was not there, it having been taken by a Mr. Scott who had gone to Fair Haven and was expected home any minute, so Mr. Harriman rode on toward town to meet him and get the rifle, which he did, but had to go two miles further than he expected. About the time that Mr. Harriman returned Mr. Elijah Doble came along and the four of us started to take up the trail of the lone savage.

While we were awaiting Mr. Harriman's return, it was amazing to hear Mrs. Harriman laying plans to take the Indian's body, after we had succeeded in finishing him off, to Clearwater and show the unbelievers there that there were real Indians out our way.

Well, as I said, we proceeded down the lake and were going up the shore towards where we expected to strike the Indian's trail when suddenly my father came into view a short distance ahead of us. When we met, he seemed to be in much the same frame of

Library of Congress

mind that he was in a couple of years before when he learned the facts in regard to the Chippewas breaking out as related by me in a former chapter. He had gone to Warner's and not finding him at home had concluded to head the Indian off alone, and had come down through the woods, but had seen no Indian nor any sign of any and he was going home and have a settlement with those kids for getting him off on such a fool's errand. But Mr. Harriman and I prevailed on him to accompany us up the lake shore to where the supposed Indian had landed.

39

When we had reached a place about where we supposed he had landed, we noticed a lot of cattle grazing around with two or three cowbells jangling merrily as they fed around. Those cattle excited my suspicions and when we came opposite them we saw a well defined trail which came ashore through the lily pads, then through some mud, and had climbed the bank, thus showing very plainly where the Indian on his pony had made his way.

In after years, I was reputed to be as good as an Indian in trailing anything, and as we came to that trail, I glanced at the pony's tracks and instantly saw that they had been made by a cloven foot, as I had suspicioned when I saw the cattle.

The whole thing was then plain. A lonesome cow on the south side of the bay, hearing the bells and probably seeing some of the cattle on the opposite shore, and not being averse to taking a bath, had swam across instead of legging it around the shore. So an inoffensive white cow with a broad dark band around her middle, seen at a distance of three-quarters of a mile by a pair of excitable kids, had been transformed into a savage Indian mounted on a white pony.

The excitement immediately subsided in our vicinity but not elsewhere when Elder Harriman got Jimmie's rifle from Scott as Scott was returning from Fair Haven, he had briefly recounted to him the news and Scott instantly turned and retraced his steps to Fair

Library of Congress

Haven, and as he was telling the news, the man who was carrying the mail to Kingston came along and took it out there, and parties were immediately on the alert to head off the raider. The news also travelled the other directions and like all such stories it did not shrink any while on its way. We afterward learned that by the time it had reached Minneapolis, it had reached such alarming proportions that some people near the city moved into town for protection.

In conclusion I would say that the black banded cow was the last "Indian" that was ever heard of in that part of the country until they commenced to return as one of the chief attractions in medicine shows.

CHAPTER VII The Sioux Indians

To a person not conversant with the Sioux Indian's manner of life, a description of some of it might be interesting.

Those that came up into our part of the state in the autumn or early winter had their summer homes on the Minnesota River near Fort Ridgley. They numbered about 300 or more and comprised a part of two bands, Little Crow's and Black Dog's, so the report was.

A good many of them had ponies with travois to carry their camp equipment and the smaller children on. The travois were generally made of two long light poles sixteen feet or more in length and two inches in diameter at the butt end which slid on the ground behind the pony while the small ends were attached to a sort of saddle girthed to the pony's back.

At the back end, the poles were about five feet apart and about the middle of the long poles some cross pieces were lashed, on which the baggage was placed and lashed securely and on which a place was arranged for the small children to ride.

With that rig they could go almost anywhere that a pony could go, over logs and brush, unless it was too large. The women always led the ponies and when they came to a stream they did not ride but waded right through with the pony and travois following.

Their tents, or tepees in which they lived were round and conical, about sixteen feet in diameter and were stretched over a number of light poles, about sixteen feet long and fastened together at the top and spaced about three feet apart in a circle at the bottom.

At the top of the tent one of the seams was left open for four or five feet and a flap of the canvas was left loose and an extra pole on the outside of the tent was fastened to the corner of this flap so that it could be stretched up in such a manner as to form an opening for the smoke to escape from the fire which was built in the center of the tepee below.

Above the fire about six feet was a small platform made of small poles attached to the main side poles and on this platform was placed their meat to dry, or "jerk", as the whites called it.

All around the fire was a layer of dry slough grass which the women cut in the marshes with their knives. Upon this grass was placed their blankets and there they slept.

41

Some of the Indians did not have ponies to move their camp equipage and then the women had to pack it and it was surprising to see what ponderous loads some of them had to stagger along with while their husbands walked along in front with nothing but their guns to carry.

Except for carrying in game that he had killed during the day, I do not remember of ever seeing a Sioux warrior do a stroke of labor as they considered it beneath their dignity to do anything such as work.

Library of Congress

The three winters of '59, '60, and '61, they encamped about one half mile from our house and we did a considerable trading with them as they wanted flour, vegetables, sugar, and hay. The latter they fed to their ponies. We received in exchanged venison, deer tallow, and occasionally buckskin moccasins.

Often during the night we could hear their drums going as they were having their religious ceremonies, which they did quite often.

After they would leave, in one or more of their lodge circles would be found a group of stones of five or six pounds each and generally painted red. These groups can still be found in places in the northern part of the state showing that a lodge had formerly stood there.

One evening, my father and I went over to their camp to trade and while making the rounds in camp we came to a tepee in which a drum and another instrument of the nature of the flute was going and my father went to the entrance and essayed to enter but was refused permission to do so.

I have referred to the monstrous loads carried by some of the squaws. In carrying them they invariably used a pack strap, a long stout thong with a portion in the center about two inches wide and fifteen inches long that was placed over the front of the head just above the forehead.

When they were preparing to start they would lean the pack against the tree or other objects and then sit down with their back against it, then they would adjust the strap over the front of their heads and then extend their hands towards some friend standing near who would grasp their hands then leaning far back would assist them in arising to an upright position, the load resting on their back just above the hips.

Library of Congress

The men also carried a pack strap with them when hunting and when they killed a deer they proceeded to dress it in such a manner that it could be carried with strap across the forehead with a pack well up on the shoulders.

Although the men were almost universally lean and spare they must have been exceedingly strong as I have often seen an Indian come into camp up in the evening carrying two deer at the same time, which would call forth an extra amount of "Hi, yah, yah" from the small boys who made a practice of greeting the successful hunters with a chorus of "Hi, yah, yahs" whenever they appeared loaded with game.

I will just explain that when a hunter killed more than one deer at a time he generally, in dressing them, discarded the neck bone and the half of the back bone although he was careful to cut the meat from the discarded bone.

On one occasion as my father and I were returning from hunting, we came to where two Indians were dressing three deer which they had just killed. They made us understand that they wished to trade some of the meat for other things that they wanted. So when they had finished dressing the deer we took the hams of a large one and started for our home three-fourths of a mile distant, wading on the smooth ice of the lake which was our best route home.

As we were passing a large granite boulder which lay on the shore about ten rods distant, one of the Indians suddenly turned and went to the rock, stopped and touched it on the side, and then came on and joined us and then we went on to the house where we gave them what they wished in exchange for the meat.

The next day, happening to be up along the lake shore, I remembered the occurrence of the previous day and went to the rock to see why the Indian had touched it and I found a small piece of downy feather that had been colored scarlet and which he had placed there

Library of Congress

when he had touched it. What his object was in doing this I never could figure out unless it was a sort of sacrifice in thankfulness for having just killed the three deer.

I have seen something of the same kind practiced among the Chippewas who lived on Leech Lake. When I first came to where the town of Walker now stands, as I was navigating the lake, I noticed in a number of localities the bells, so called, of moose hung up on trees and some of them had the appearance of having hung there for years and on one occasion I was fortunate enough to find one that had recently been put up. It was hung on a pole set in the ground at what was known as the Hard Landing on the south bank of Boy River, about three miles above the mouth of the river.

As I had never seen a fresh one before, I wished to examine it so, after scanning the river up and down to make sure that there were no Indians in sight, I took it down and looked it over. Tied in with netting twine among the long, coarse hair of the bell, was a small piece of a plug of tobacco and at intervals among the hair was a number of pieces of scarlet dress braid, also tied in with the same twine.

I had always before made a practice of not interfering with anything that belonged to the Indians but that interesting object was too much for me so I "cabbaged" it and afterwards I gave it to an old friend of mine, Mr. Jacob V. Brower, to be placed by him in the state historical society collection.

I also gave, at the same time, a lot of other truck that I had collected in a more legitimate manner, including the Kathio bark mentioned by Brower in his "Memoirs, No. 5. Kathio" and illustrated at page 85 of that work, a numbered copy of which he presented me with, as I had furnished him with a lot of information in regard to the location of ancient mounds and earth works that I had noticed in my hunting trips to northern Minnesota.

Another incident that I observed while I was living at Walker shows that trait of a sort of nature worship that some, if not all, of the Indians practiced at that time.

Library of Congress

Early one morning, I was at work on my steamer, the Leila D., which was lying along side the village dock when I noticed a young Indians, now known as Chief Jim Goose Greenhill the son of Chief Ne-gaun-e-benais, (Leading Feather), coming down the hill towards the dock. His arms were flexed at the elbows and were extended in front and on them he carried a folded red blanket.

He did not seem to notice me and as he passed near me I noticed that he seemed to be talking either to himself or an unseen being. He proceeded to the outer end of the dock, stood there for a few seconds, still talking in the same low reverent tones, and then he cast the blanket into the waves, which were running pretty high as there was a brisk northwest wind at the time.

As it was early in the morning, he undoubtedly thought he had been unobserved and as I suddenly stepped out and greeted him as he was returning he looked surprised an embarrassed. As I was well acquainted with him I asked him why he did what he had just done.

He replied that, exposed to the dangers of the lake as he often was, he felt thankful that nothing had ever happened to him.

I supposed at the time that I was the only witness of the strange scene but a boatman by the name of Lee Hallock was watching him from his boat house on the other side of the dock and as soon as the young Indian had gone back up town, Lee, having no fear of the spirit of the great lake, proceeded to rescue the blanket before it had sunk in the watery grave to which it had been consigned. When Lee unfolded the blanket, he found, wrapped inside, a portion of a plug of tobacco.

It seems from this incident and also the one I have just related about the moose bell that the Indians thought that the spirits were very fond of tobacco.

Library of Congress

I wrote before about the Sioux Indians camping for three successive winters near my father's house. While they were there, they would often come to our house and sit in front of our big fireplace and smoke.

All the men seemed to be provided with pipes made of Catlinite, the sacred red stone procured from the quarries at Pipestone. The pipes were nearly all of the same pattern but some of them were very large. One that I saw I believe would weigh very nearly two pounds, that is, without the stem which was about two feet long and an inch in diameter except in the middle, where it was made smaller for a space of four or five inches.

This pipe stem, when it was not in use, was carried by being stuck diagonally under the owners belt behind his back, the belt fitting into the small part prevented it from falling out and being lost. The red stone head of the pipe was carried inside the coat.

The first thing generally that an Indian would ask for on entering the house was min-ne, (water) and after taking a good drink, then he would seat himself by the fire and take out his pipe, insert the stem and produce his bag of kinnekinic and commence smoking.

Kinnekinic is the dried inner bark of *Cornus stolonifera*, commonly called red osier.

Some of the very old men had a manner of smoking that I never saw any one else follow, and I do not see how they could stand it. They would suck away and inhale the smoke for at least ten seconds and then blow it out through the nose for about the same length of time, then repeat. I do not remember of ever seeing a Chippewa smoke in this manner.

Like white people, the Indians were curious to learn about things with which they were not acquainted. One day as one was sitting by our fire smoking, he happened to notice a string of red pepper hanging on the wall and made signs that he wanted one so my mother gave him a large one.

Library of Congress

He took it and, Indian fashion, first smelled of it. Then he bit off a very little from the small end, then a little more, which he proceeded to chew—but not for long. He suddenly arose and made a bee-line for the water bucket—but that drink transformed a placid, well satisfied Indian into a frantic one.

Rushing to the kitchen where my mother was he spied a kettle of meat which, on account of his presence my mother had allowed to boil dry and scorch badly. When he saw the meat, although it was as badly burnt by the fire as his mouth was by the pepper, he made signs that he wanted some of it. So my mother told him to help himself, which he proceeded to do. He then quieted down to his normal state.

He was, however, very careful to take the big pepper and put it safely away inside his coat and I have no doubt that he entertained his friends with it later, as Indians are proverbially generous with what they happen to have.

I think it was in the winter of '61 and '62 that these Indians hired my father's ox team to haul a load of baggage and supplies with from their camp near our place to a place at the east end of Clearwater Lake about two miles distance.

After getting the load on the sled, and it was a big one almost like a load of hay, I was given the post of steersman to guide the load to its destination.

I only had two passengers in addition to the load of goods. One of them was a boy about ten years of age who had in his care two weapons that did not appear to be of any practical use unless in a fight at close quarters with an enemy. They were a sort of lance or spear with blades 45 like a long knife but sharp on both edges and attached to a handle about five feet long. In the hands of an active man, one of them would be a bad thing to go up against at close quarters.

My other passengers was a big fellow who was nearly blind with sore eyes but is appeared that be could still see to a certain extent as, while his wife was working as fast as she

Library of Congress

was able, to get their tepee and baggage loaded on our sled while he was standing around doing nothing, their little child began to cry. Instead of him attempting to quiet it, he suddenly seized his wife by the hair and jerked her to the ground where she lay face down for a few seconds and then glanced up to see what her lord and master wanted her to do. He pointed his finger toward the squalling kid, which she then endeavored to quiet.

It was surprising to see how little clothing some of those Indians wore on their feet and legs. I have seen in soft snow the print of their toes in the buckskin moccasins and a great many of them wore leggings that fit the legs below the knee so tight that they must have been sewed in place as they were so close fitting that they never could have been drawn on.

Above the knee they were quite loose and open near the top, so much so that when the men were sitting by a fire, the upper part of the inside of the thigh showed quite plainly below the breech cloth, which all the men wore.

The men all wore well finished coats made of heavy, white woolen blankets of the kind known as mackinaw blankets.

For a covering for the head they had a sort of capote made of a rectangular piece of blanket doubled and sewed at one end leaving one side and one end open, thus forming a cover for the head and a short cape extending down on the shoulders. It was fastened at the throat and could be slipped back off the head when not needed, which was most of the time. In that hood was generally from one to half a dozen eagle feathers denoting the number of enemies the warrior had slain, or on whom he had counted coup.

A few of the Indians had single barreled rifles but the greater number used single barreled shot guns, many of them being flint locks.

When they ran short of buck shot and had bar lead, they would cut it into slugs and then chew the, with their teeth until they were practically round so they would shoot alright in their shot guns.

The handsomest gun that I ever owned was a rifle that my father received in a trade with a Sioux warrior for a gun that I had. The Indian had lost the hammer off his rifle and had tried in vain to get it repaired. He came to our house and wanted to trade it for my gun so my father made a deal with him and got the rifle which he afterwards repaired.

When we started for Illinois in the fall of '62, my father let Mr. Cyrus Smith have the gun, as he did not have any and he wanted mine. It was a beautiful rifle, with German silver and brass mountings and I hated to part with it as it was a beautiful piece of workmanship.

CHAPTER VIII The Mystery of the Lost Children of the Two Rivers Settlement

Late in the autumn of 1870 I was hunting on the headwaters of Getchell Creek and over on the south branch of Two Rivers and was boarding at the home of Lieutenant William Helsper, a civil war veteran.

He was an Alsatian by birth if I remember correctly, the son of a French father and German mother and had come to the U. S. when he was young, had enlisted in the Union army and about the time of his enlistment had fallen in love with and married a comely Irish lass and they were then living on a homestead on Getchell Creek near its head.

They were fine people and had three children, Frank, Joe and Little Lizzie, a child of wonderful beauty.

Of the many wonderful autumns which I have seen in my 72 years of residence in the North Star state, I do not recollect one that surpassed that autumn of 1870. One evening about Dec. 19 or 20, when I came in from hunting, Mrs. Helsper informed me that a neighbor, a Mr. Bloxham, and his father-in-law, Mr. Oldham, and Ed. Lovell, Bloxham's

Library of Congress

brother-in-law, had gone that morning to carry out the body of a little girl, who with her little brother 10 years of age had been lost some two months before from the Two Rivers settlement. When I heard it I was sorry that I had not known of it sooner as I would have liked very much to have accomplished them.

When they returned I interviewed Bloxham and he gave me the facts in the case, which were as follows:

Some time about the 10th or 15th of October two children of a family named Nelson who lived near where the Two Rivers entered the Mississippi had gone one evening to bring in the cows. The elder of the two was a girl of 12 and the other a boy of 10.

As they did not return when expected their parents instituted search but not finding them, they alarmed the neighbors and systematic search began that was kept up for nearly two weeks but it availed nothing as they could find not a trace of them. At one time during the search there were over 100 men engaged in it, so Bloxham said.

Finally the search was given up and it was a great mystery what had become of them. They had disappeared as completely as if some gigantic 47 bird to prey had swooped down and carried them away.

On the Sunday previous to the departure of Bloxham and his companions an Indian who was encamped with a number of others on the shores of Lynx lake, while hunting the previous day had found on the banks of one branch of the two rivers the body of a little girl. When he first came to Bloxham, as he could speak no English to amount anything and as Bloxham was about as well versed in Indian, it was almost impossible for Bloxham to understand what he wanted to tell him. All that Bloxham could make out was that a Schmokeman Nepo Squaw and that he wanted Bloxham to come over to the Indian camp the next morning, but when morning came bloxham did not go ever as the way he

Library of Congress

understood it was that a white man had killed a squaw, and he told me he thought that if some man had done that, he, Bloxham, did not care to be mixed up in it so he did not go.

The next day (Monday) the Indian appeared again and by making a map in the ashes of Bloxham's fireplace and by signs he finally made Bloxham understand that he had found the body of a little white girl on the bank of a stream off to the northeast. Bloxham immediately remembered to hearing of the children being lost some two months before and realized that the mystery was about to be solved. He then notified his father-in-law and brother-in-law and they made an arrangement to go over to the camp the next morning. It was 17 miles through to where the parents lived and it was nearly all a wilderness of poplar brush, some of it 15 or 20 feet high and interspersed with sloughs, marshes and swamps.

On arriving at the camp the Indian led them to a point on the south branch of the Two Rivers about half way through, or 8½ miles from Bloxham's home. There on a point of land almost encircled by a bend of the stream was a little shelter which the child had built to protect her as far as possible from the storms and cold. In it lay her little body, emaciated almost beyond description.

Some snow had fallen Thursday night and her track in the fresh snow made by her on her quest for food Friday had attracted the Indian's attention and he followed it to find out what a child's track in that pathless wilderness meant. When he found her she had not, in all probability been dead over 24 hours. He immediately cut a lot of tall grass and small willows and bound her little body up in such a manner as to protect it from wild carnivorous animals, should any find it, and left and came back to his camp and next morning came over to Bloxham and tried to make him understand what he had found.

The three men then began to construct a rude letter on which to carry her remains and while they were thus employed, one of them noticed that Bloxham's little dog which had accompanied was scratching at something in the snow on the creek bank about 10 feet

Library of Congress

from where the body of the girl lay. He went there and examined the place and found cloth. Brushing away the snow he found the body of the boy frozen into the ground so badly that they chop it out and had to be very careful lest they break off and leave some portion of the limbs on the ground.

They then arranged the bodies on the litter and carried them through to Mr. Nelson's home. Bloxham told me that he thought the boy had been dead over a month as he was not emaciated like the girl's body was.

It has always been a puzzle to me why when those children came to that stream that they did not follow it down until they had reached the road that crossed it near its mouth. The only explanation that I can think of is that the boy was so ill or so exhausted that he could not proceed any farther and that the girl would not desert him.

Some people undoubtedly blamed their parents for sending them into the woods where they were liable to get lost but I do not as that was a common way of doing things in those days as my brothers and myself used to hunt the cows before we were as old as those children were and we never suffered any harm even when we had to stay out all night and had the whole neighborhood firing guns during the night to guide us out but it was too dark to travel through the dark woods so one of my brothers and I lay still until it was light enough to see to travel. Then we went home. We would hear the guns but we could not make them hear us as we were too far away.

I often wondered in my younger years before I became thoroughly conversant with the habits and character of the timber wolf why those children were not killed and devoured by them as the country in that vicinity was badly infested with them. I remember that very nearly the time their bodies were found that one day when I was hunting a few miles west of the place I came upon a well beaten trail made by some animal of the dog kind.

I at first thought that some settler lived near that I did not know of and that he must have a very large dog that had found a dead animal and was getting his board out of it. As I walked

Library of Congress

along the trail I noticed that the tracks all went one way and I realized at once that the trail had been made by a pack of timber wolves. I immediately became interested to know how many there were and I followed them until they separated and I found that there were 11 of them. Now why did not those wolves attack those children? My answer is that according to my observation there is no animal that runs in the woods that is as afraid of the scent of a human being as a wolf is.

In my hunting experience of over 65 years during which I have killed over 400 deer, a number of moose, bears lynxes, wolves, and wildcats and slept in my sleeping bag or blankets for weeks at a time often without any fire in country infested by timber wolves and never of any coming near me when I was on the ground where they could scent me.

I was sitting in a tree one night watching for a bear and a pack of 11 timber wolves came along and as I was up from the ground they could not scent me and one of them came directly under me and the consequence was I hung up his hid the next morning.

Whenever I hear a man tell of being chased or treed by wolves I at once put him down as being a lineal descendent of Ananias.

Chapter IX The Mystery of the Disappearance of Miss McNeal

When the Northern Pacific Railway, in its western course, reached the Mississippi river, a new town was started and one of its principal Streets stood a large pine which was destined, some two years later, to bear peculiar fruit.

The pine in question stood directly in front of what was known as "The Last Turn" Saloon. Why the saloon was so named I never learned, but I think that it was probably so called for the reason that if a man was foolish enough to turn in and take a drink of the stuff that was sold there, that he stood a good chance of never turning again.

Library of Congress

Along the old government road leading from St. Anthony to Crow Wing there were, in an early day, numerous hotels or stopping places, where travelers could procure entertainment for the night or as long as they desired to stay. Those between St. Cloud and Little Falls as I remember them' were Scotts at the crossing of Rock Creek. Greens, where the village of Rices now stands; Rices, ¼ mile east of Greens on the Rich Prairie road; Lamberts, a short distance south of Platte River; and McNeals, at, or near where the town of Royalton now stands.

In the late summer of 1872, if I remember correctly, my brother-in-law, Herbert R. Shattock, of Clearwater, having just returned from a trip up north, visited us and told us that, on his way down from Brainerd, he had stopped at McNeals for dinner and found them terribly worried over the disappearance of their daughter, a young lady who a day or two previously had started to visit a neighbor and had suddenly disappeared. As they knew that she was not entangled in any love affair they were at a loss for some cause for her disappearance.

As it was in blueberry time there were parties of Indians in the neighborhood gathering them, but as Indians as a class, have never attained the unenviable notoriety that some negroes and, to our shame, even some white men have, in their attacks on defenseless women, they, it seems were not blamed for her sudden disappearance, which was a mystery for a year, if I remember right. When blueberry time came around again it brought the Indians to pick them and among them were some that had been there the previous year.

50

In those times, if an Indian's Squaw, or wife, displeased him, it seems that he would occasionally give her a "dressing down" as the boys say now.

An instance of this kind happened to the wife of an Indian who had been in the vicinity the previous year. It appears that she did not take to her loving spouse's ministrations kindly,

Library of Congress

but smarting both in spirit and body, resolved to get even with him, so she went to some of her white friends and told them what she knew of her husband's tricks. She stated that her husband and another Indian, whom she named, had the year before, while in that vicinity, waylaid, outraged and murdered a girl near Platte River crossing and offered to guide a party to the spot where the body was buried.

They went and at a place pointed out by her, under a pile of brush, which had been placed to hide the grave, the body of the unfortunate girl, or what remained of it, was found.

The two Indians were taken into custody and were taken to Brainerd to be placed in jail, but whether they ever reached the jail or not, I do not remember, but a mob of men found and took them from the Sheriff and suspended them from a large limb which projected over the street from that big white pine in front of the "Last Turn" saloon.

Of course, there was great excitement among the white people over the occurrence but there was more among the Indians. To have two of their warriors sent to the happy hunting grounds with a rope encircling their necks for just murdering a single white girl was not to be tolerated and they threatened to wipe out the town, which they might easily have done.

The people became alarmed and telegraphed the governor for troops to protect them from the enraged Indians.

When someone incautiously told one of the warriors that they had sent for troops he dramatically waved his hand three times from east to west and paused and again waved it three times in the same way, indicating that it would take three days for the messenger to reach the governor and three days more for the troops to come from the fort, he did not understand the nature of the telegraph, and was much surprised that evening when the N. P. west bound train came rolling in. An acquaintance of mine who lived in Brainerd at that time, graphically described the scene to me.

Library of Congress

He said that a time, the town was full of Indians, the warriors surly and arrogant, the squaws more practical minded, with their loads of blueberries for sale or trade thronged the streets, when as the train rolled in and stopped at the depot, a fife began to squeal and a drum to beat and the troops began to file out of the coaches, the warriors gave one look, wheeled and broke for the brush followed by their better halves, some of whom, having not yet disposed of their berries which were in their blankets hanging from their shoulders, dropped one corner of the blanket and let the lucious berries roll upon the ground, and followed their lords to the security of the bushes.

My informant said that five minutes had not elapsed from the first 51 shrill squeal of the fife until not an Indian was visible.

So ended the threatened Indian outbreak.

For many years that old pine stood in front of the "Last Turn" saloon and when it was first pointed out to me in 1880, it was then dead and of its smaller branches had fallen off but that big limb, which had born such strange fruit, still remained attached to the trunk and standing out like a specter against the sky was pointed out to travelers on the N.P. train as it went speeding past.

CHAPTER X When I Received the Worst Scare of My Life

In the fall of 1891, having heard that there was plenty of game along the line of the Duluth and Winnipeg Railroad near Swan river, I wrote to my former hunting partner, Wilber Shattuck, of Clearwater, Minnesota, my wife's cousin, about it. We made arrangements to meet at Brainerd on a certain date and go up there together.

When I arrived at Brainerd he was not there, having been unavoidably detained. As I had a ticket for Carlton and my equipment checked for that point, I proceeded on alone. I was much disappointed in his not being there as I never considered it safe for any one person

Library of Congress

to go off into the wilds alone. Not that there was any danger from wild animals, but hunters sometimes meet with accidents.

I went to Carlton, then to Cloquet, and on up the D. & W. to Grand Rapids, where I stopped at a hotel and next morning after packing a little grub in a pair of light woolen blankets, I shouldered my little pack and rifle and I started up the R. R. line.

I had picked up all the information from my genial host that I could the evening before and made my plans accordingly.

I first went to Pokegama Falls and was surprised to see how narrow the Mississippi river was at the falls where it had broken through the ledge of quartzite which the water falls over. The stone was very beautiful. It appeared as if the quartz sand of which it had been formed had been mixed with about an equal amount of crushed Taconite or similar red rock before it had been cemented into sandstone and metamorphosed by heat and pressure into quartzite. After looking things over I went on up to Bass Brook, then out on Sims' logging railroad about 7 miles. I saw some deer signs but not enough to suit me, so went off east for a while then struck south towards the Rapids and came to a place where there seemed to be a number of deer. I stayed all night in my blanket and hunted the next day but got nothing, and went back to the Rapids. The next morning I went down to Swan River station, took some grub and blankets and started down the line to where the Wright and Davis logging railroad crossed the D. & W. There I happened to meet a train so rode out 7 miles to the end of the line near Floodwood lake. Over towards the lake, I saw plenty of moose signs, but 53 not much deer sign, then I returned to the railroad and walked back about 3 ½ miles to where I had seen country that looked like a good place for deer and found a great many deer signs and decided to investigate.

I had noticed a trail leading to the east from the railroad and as trails always had a fascination for me I followed it. It led down through the hardwood timber for a half mile or so, when it came to one of the most beautiful little lakes that I have ever seen. It was

Library of Congress

about three fourths of a mile long and was nearly divided by two points that projected into it from the east and the west. The trail ended at the lake, but a short distance back I had noticed that a part of the trail had turned up north on a trial survey line. I returned to the line and followed it north until opposite the narrows in the lake. There the trail turned east and went down to the west point. This point had been formed by a spring brook which headed in a gorge to the west and ran down into the lake at the point. It ran through a grove of evergreens that covered the point and gorge west of it. It among the evergreens and concealed by them was a camp built of lumber, with one corner nearly over the brook. I had never seen before a building so completely hidden. I walked up to the door and knocked. A young men came to the door and asked me to enter. I did so and saw two more young men there. They were each about 19 or 20 years of age. As it was then about noon, I expected they would inquire if I had been to dinner, but they did not and seemed strangely reticent.

I asked them if they were hunting. They said they were. I then asked them if they had had any luck and they said not very much, as they had only killed one deer in the last month. It had been swimming in the lake a month before. As they did not ask me a single question, I concluded that they did not wish to prolong the interview, so bidding them good day, I left.

I went back down the survey line and over to the south end of the lake. Near the south end of the lake I found a heavy deer trail coming down from the northwest. It passed through a hollow and went up over a rise to the southeast. As there was no law against shooting deer by moonlight and as the moon at that time was nearly full, I decided to watch that night by that trail and made my plans preparations accordingly.

First, with the aid of my hatchet to cut roots, I scooped out with my hands, a hole about a foot wide and the same in depth. I then gathered a quantity of dry wood and pine bark and cut and broke it up into little short pieces, putting them near the pit. I then made a screen of evergreens about 2½ feet high between the trail and my pit. I did this because from appearances, I knew that it would be cool before morning and, with only two light blankets,

Library of Congress

I would be pretty cold. As it was some time before night, I went and scouted around for a while and came around just before dark. I made a very small fire in the bottom of my pit, put my rifle by my side, doubled my blanket around my neck, and sat cross-legged, Indian fashion, with the pit between my thighs. Spreading the lower edges 54 of the blankets in a circle around me, I waited.

Nothing came along until about o'clock, when I heard a steady tramp coming down the trail from the northwest. It came up the rise and I saw that it was a large buck. When it was nearly opposite me I pointed my gun where his heart was and pulled the trigger. The old 45-90 roared and the buck wheeled a little to the left, smashed through a fallen tree-top, ran about 6 or 7 rods and went down. I dropped my blankets and went in the direction I had heard him last. As he had fallen in a patch of bright moonlight, I saw his horns shining so found him easily. He was a fine large 10 point buck with a fine set of antlers. After dressing him and hanging him, up I went back to my vigil but nothing came along and when it became light, I took breakfast and went to the railroad station and got some provisions of which I had brought along a good supply in a large trunk and taking my sleeping bag, I returned and made preparations to repeat the performance of the previous night, but in a more restful manner.

My sleeping bag was made of 6 large long-wooled sheep-skins that I had tanned for the purpose. It was about 16 inches wide at the foot and 28 or 30 inches at the head and was closed about three fifths of the distance, leaving the wide part open on one edge but the wide end was closed also. It was covered with heavy bed-ticking and had loose lining of light weight blanket which I could remove and wash when it became soiled.

The whole thing weighed about 17 pounds. At the head end I had a few feet of small rope securely fastened. When I had to move camp, I would commence at the foot of the bag and roll it tightly until I reached the head when I would tie the head-rope around it and slip the whole thing into a small sack. Then it was ready to move.

Library of Congress

Many nights have I slept in that bag while hunting in northern Minnesota, many nights without any fire, as in that bag I would be comfortable in any weather.

I have heard men tell of what times they had when attacked or pursued by wolves, of which were certainly a plenty when I was there. There must have been something peculiar about the Dally scent for they always seemed to give me a wide berth and if, in hunting, I got near one, he always had urgent business elsewhere.

After eating supper, I found my place to watch. A few rods southeast of my first stand, there was a large birch tree that leaned west. Against the foot of this tree I placed my sleeping bag in such a position that I could recline against this tree. Having arranged my screen in front, I then began my watch. About 8 or o'clock I heard a deer coming down across the trail that came down from the southwest and struck the main trail a few rods northwest. I saw him quite distinctly but as he was 6 to 7 rods off, I waited as I thought there was an even chance that when he came to the main trail, he would turn my way and then I would be sure of him. Instead, he turned northwest and was soon out of hearing. As I had been awake 55 all the previous night, I was sleepy.

When I am the watch any little noise will awaken me, so that I was not afraid of anything passing me un-noticed and I went to sleep. Then was when I got the scare of my life. I have been in several pretty tight places during my life but I never was in a place where I thought death within a few seconds was an absolute certainly until then.

I was lying with my open to the sky as I always did when the weather was not very cold. I was, I thought, partly asleep when I noticed a very bright star overhead. As I looked at it saw that it was increasing in size very rapidly. I immediately came to the conclusion that it was a very large meteor and as there was no lateral motion I knew that it was coming straight towards me. By this time it was as large as a full moon. As I sprang to my feet, the thought flashed through my brain that that thing would mash me right into the earth and my wife and children at home would never know what had become of me. I do not suppose

Library of Congress

that after I was on my feet that it took more than a second for me to get out of that sleeping bag, but before I was out of it, I glanced up to see how near the meteor was for I expected it would look to be as big as a house. Greatly was I relieved, in fact, I do not remember of ever being one tenth so relieved as I was when that glance revealed nothing more than the full moon shining up in the sky. I slid back into my bag and there until morning.

As the weather looked threatening, I thought best to make a place where I could find shelter from a storm if one should come up.

A small rapid brook entered the lake at the south end. About 30 rods west of this brook ran the railroad survey trial line. Along this line, spaced 100 feet apart, with a number on each, were the section stakes. Directly opposite a certain number and between the lines and the spring creek was a small island in the swamp and on it with other timber was a large white pine which had died some time before and from which the thick bark was falling off in large pieces. A short distance off was a small tree which had been blown over and partly broken off about 3 ½ feet from the ground. It lay in a nearly horizontal position. I gathered some small poles and stood them up at an angle of about 45 degrees on the north side of the aforesaid tree. I covered about 8 or 9 feet long and also place some to enclose the ends of the shed thus formed. I then, with my hunting knife, cut a lot of tall grass that grew near at hand. I laid a layer of this grass over these poles then put a layer of the pine bark fitted together on top of the hay. I then got a small log about 8 inches in diameter and laid it directly under the one that supported the roof. I then piled a lot of the dry grass to form a bed on which I placed my sleeping bag.

My camp utensils and provisions and ammunition I put under shed at my head, then built a fire in front and had a place fit for a king. As it was still open in front, I got some empty sacks that had contained slabs of bacon, from an abandoned railroad camp and nailed them to the outer 56 side of the log that supported the roof and let them hang down to form a curtain in front. When I was cooking my meals, or sitting by the fire evenings, I would

Library of Congress

flop the curtains up over the roof and when I went to bed I would drop them to keep out the wind and snow.

The next Sunday, as I was enjoying myself, sitting by the fire, I heard a noise down the little brook and presently the three young men from the camp up at the point of the lake appeared. They acted entirely different from what they did about a week before. They told me that they had run across my camp only a day or two before and had seen the heart of the buck that I got the first night, lying on the roof of the camp.

As they had no venison in camp and I was well supplied, they told me that I had better move up to their place as they had plenty of room and lots of other provisions, except deer meat. So I did so.

While camping with them, I killed a buck that I think was the oldest deer that I ever got and had the largest horns. Deer's horns at that time were not very valuable property so when the railroad agent a Cloquet offered me \$5.00 for that set, I let him have them.

CHAPTER XI Who Killed Andrew Leighton

Among the early settlers of the Township of South Side, Wright County, Minnesota, was A. B. Leighton, who, with his father-in-law, Pearson Gould, and his brothers-in-law Jeremiah, Wiggin, and Augustus Gould settled on the shores of the beautiful lake Sylvia about the year 1860, or maybe a little later. A. B. or, as everyone called him, Billings, like a great many others, especially those who had formerly lived and lumbered in the state of Maine, would each winter "go up in the woods" as it was termed and work during the winter for some lumbermen and then, in the spring, come down with the drive of logs, then come home and raise a crop of vegetables, potatoes, corn, etc., and then when winter again came they would go again, so it is not surprising that when Billings' sons grew up that they took to the woods as their father had done before he had gotten his farm cleared up and in shape to demand his attention the whole year. In later years at the time when the incident that I am about to relate occurred many of the lumbermen, when they had finished work

Library of Congress

in the spring would leave the most of their horses, their logging sleds and other tools at the camp that they had occupied during the winter and leave in charge a reliable man to look after the stock and take care of things in general, until the next autumn when the crew would reassemble and resume operations. It was an exceedingly lonely life and it required a man that could be depended upon to perform the various duties that devolved upon him in a satisfactory manner. They generally cleared and broke up enough ground so that he could raise enough potatoes, rutabagas, cabbages and other vegetables to supply the camp during the next winter.

In the summer of 1894, Andrew Leighton, the third son of Billings Leighton, was in charge of the Brained Lumber Company's Camp at Blind Lake, Cass County, Minnesota. Some time in July a timber cruiser calling at the camp, as they were in the habit of doing, found the camp with no one in charge and the supplies that had been left in camp from the previous winter were being looted and carried off by the Indians, who professed to have no knowledge of Leighton's disappearance.

Not far from the camp was found a mound of fresh earth indicating that something had been buried there quite recently, but on investigation, it was found to be the grave of a horse that had died and Andrew had buried. 58 Probably some of the last work that he had done before his mysterious disappearance.

In addition to the supplies that had been taken there were missing also two corner-binds, heavy chains from the bunks of a logging sled that stood near the camp. Nothing was found to throw anymore light on the subject until the next July, a year and four days after his disappearance, when his body, minus the hands, came to the surface of the lake and was found floating there. Around the waist was wrapped one of the missing corner-binds. The other had been undoubtedly tied to his wrists and had kept his body at the bottom of the lake until decay had caused his hands to come off at the wrists, relieving the body which then came to the surface. The question was then, who was the murderer? That

question was not answered for some time and then when it was there were grave doubts whether it had been answered correctly.

Some time after the body was found a party of Indians came to the store of James Curo at what is now Hackensack, Cass County, and while there one of them undertook to appropriate a sack of flour that he had not paid for. Curo tried to take it from him, but the Indian proved too strong for the old man and got him down on the floor.

When Curo's son, John a young chap of eighteen or nineteen, heard the racket he rushed into the room and, seeing his father prostrate on the floor with an Indian on top of him, wrenched a gun out of the hands of another Indian who was standing looking on, and clubbing the gun, brought it down with such force on the head of his father's assailant that he was injured to such an extent that he made a journey to the "happy hunting grounds" a few days later. After his death, the Indians told that it was he that killed Andrew Leighton, shooting him with Andrew's own gun while Andrew was getting a bucket of water.

I always had grave doubts as to he being the guilty one, although he possibly may have been. My opinion is that it might have been Bungay Buck, or some other Indian of equally poor reputation, who committed the crime and then, to quiet suspicion, it was laid at the door of this Indian who was already dead and beyond the reach of the white man's law.

Whether the Indian who attempted to take the sack of flour from Curo without paying for it had absorbed too much of Curo's "bug juice" I do not know. My knowledge of the Indian character leads me to think that the Indians on the whole are less inclined to thievery and robbery than the whites, although when under the influence of strong drink, they were liable to take what they had no right to.

CHAPTER XII Who Was He and What Caused His Death

The autumn of 1892, I think it was, was very dry in the part of the state where I was then residing and forest fires were very prevalent but as the forests in that part of the state were

Library of Congress

hardwood, the fires did not endanger life nor do the damage that they would have done in a pine country, but nevertheless they did a lot of damage in loss of hay and the burning out of meadows.

Many fine natural meadows on which grew heavy crops of blue-joint hay were burned clear of all turf and life with a covering of several inches of ashes. Some of the farmers the next spring sowed their burned meadows with ruta бага seed and raised immense crops of roots for their stock. Others re-seeded with timothy and other grasses, while others more careless let theirs go and soon they had a thicket of poplar and willow brush instead of a good meadow.

A short distance from the village of Bertha, Todd Country, was one of those burned out meadows on which grass had been cut for many years and no one who had travelled over its smooth surface ever thought that it was the burial place of a human being.

After the turf had been burned off, there lay the scattered bones of a man. Among them was a silver watch and the remains of jackknife.

Among the first settlers of that part of the country was a family by the name of Cline who had first came in as hunters and liking the country had afterwards taken homesteads and cleared up farms. One of the sons, Jacob Cline, told me when they first came in there hunting, that they had noticed, a short distance from where the remains were afterwards found, but on dry ground near the border of the meadow, an embankment such as would be left if a small house had been banked up with earth and had then either rotted or been burned leaving the ridge of earth inclosing it still in place.

A short distance from where the cabin had stood was a tree on which were scars as if it had been cut into with an axe.

When the remains were found, the Clines remembered about the embankment and the scarred tree and went there and cut into the scars to see 60 how many years had elapsed

Library of Congress

since they were made. They found that the scars had been caused by some person cutting bullets out of the tree in order to save the lead, as was a common practice in those early days, and they also found that there were 42 annual rings of growth over the scars, showing that those bullets had been cut from that tree about the year 1850. The fact that his watch was with his remains indicated that he had not been murdered but why did he die on the meadow instead of in his cabin? The conclusion that young Cline and I arrived at was that he had a place where he obtained water dug in the meadow and while very ill had gone there to quench his thirst and had been unable to return to his cabin and had breathed out his life all alone on the turf.

I have thought since that if the site of that cabin had been dug out that the remains of his gun and perhaps other things might have been found.

As near as I can learn there was no settlement at that time nearer than Long Prairie some 25 or 30 miles distant where some colonists brought over by way of Hudson Bay by the Earl of Selkirk in 1812 and who had been flooded out of their homes in the Red River Valley near Winnipeg in 1826 and had sought new homes in the territory that was afterwards called Minnesota.

In my hunting expeditions in the northern part of Stearns County, I had noticed that many of the early settlers in those parts had small flocks of fine looking sheep of a kind that I was not acquainted with; great big square bodied fellows and I wondered where they had acquired the original stock, but I afterwards learned that their ancestors were brought from Scotland by the colonists under the Earl of Selkirk and that some of them had settle at what is now Long Prairie while others went on down and settled near Fort Snelling.

In those early days it seems that trappers often in pairs but sometimes singly, went off into the wilderness to collect the furs that always brought money.

I remember that the first bear meat that I ever ate, we got from a lone trapper in exchange for bread and flour which he needed.

CHAPTER XIII When the Indian Police Failed to Get The Booze

When I went up from Eagle Bend to Leech Lake, in the spring of 1895 I firmly resolved in my mind that I would treat the Indians in such a manner that I would never have any trouble with them and I am satisfied that if there had been no chance for the Indians to have gotten whiskey that there would have never been any occasion for trouble between us.

According to my observations the Chippewa Indian that does not like whiskey is just about as scarce as the proverbial hen's teeth.

Even those who had too much pride to be seen drinking would, so I have been informed, on what I considered good authority, go to their room in a hotel and have their drinks sent up to them and there enjoy it.

United States law in regard to furnishing an Indian intoxicating liquors was very strict but any Indian that had the money generally had no difficulty in getting all the "booze" that he could pay for.

From the upstairs window of my house in Walker we had a good view of the rear of the saloon kept by a man known as "Farmer McCabe".

On the rear wall of that building, high up, in large letters, was the legend "Rear Entrance to Farmers Place".

Any time when the Indians were receiving their annuity from the Government and at many other times, there could be seen from our window a gang of Indians standing around the rear entrance awaiting their turn to get what they most desired.

Library of Congress

In the early summer, when the young Indians who had been working for the lumbermen driving logs on the rivers and lakes, came home well supplied with bottles of whiskey which they had purchased in Park Rapids and Walker, they would hire me to land them some distance from the regular landing to avoid meeting the Indian Police for they said that the Police would take their liquor from them and instead of turning it over to the Indian Agent as they were required to do, would go off in the woods with it and have a grand celebration.

So strong was their desire to drink that they would sell supplies that they had received from the U.S. Government so that they could get money to spend for whiskey.

I believe that alcohol in its various forms is the greatest curse that 62 ever afflicted mankind and in its effect upon the Indians it is doubly so.

When I was building my steamboat the "Leila D" in the spring of 1895, I inquired of the Indians whether there were many fatalaties by drowning among them in Leech Lake in times past.

They replied that since their settlement after driving out the Sioux, about 150 years before, there had been but two persons of their tribe who had lost their lives by drowning and they were a man and his wife who had attempted to cross from Ottertail point to Pine point, a distance of about five miles, when thin ice covered the surface of most of the lake, but an open passage extended from one point to the other, but, as they were crossing, the ice under the influence of the wind closed in on them and in spite of their efforts to preserve their canoe by putting their blankets around it, the ice cut it through and they were drowned right in sight of their friends who were powerless to aid them.

How different it was after the saloons were opened at Walker!

Library of Congress

One drowning after another, both of whites and Indians, occurred and in nearly every instance drink was the primary cause of it.

In the early autumn of 1897, I think it was, there was another small steamboat running on the lake, and at that time there was very little business to do and the most of that between Walker and the Agency.

The owner of the other boat and I made an arrangement for each of us to run on alternate evenings to the Indian Agency. We generally started from Walker immediately after the train on the M & I. (or Brainerd and Northern Minnesota, as it was then called) train arrived from Brainerd, which was about four o'clock.

One evening, as I was about to start for the Agency, three men who had just arrived on the train, came down on the dock and asked me to carry them and their tent and other baggage over to the first point, about one-half mile north of Walker.

It took considerable time to get their stuff aboard and as it was then getting dark, I told a party of about a dozen Indians who wished to go to the Agency to come on board and accompany us as it would save time.

Among the Indians was the Chief of the Indian Police at the Agency and several of his men.

We ran over to the point and I went forward to help the men unload their baggage.

I had just jumped down on the ground to take their stuff as it was handed down to me, when one of the men up on the deck called to me and said, "Here Captain, these Indians are trying to rob us." I got up on deck and went to where their stuff was piled and there were three Indians hanging onto a demijohn that was between them as they squatted on the deck.

Library of Congress

I spoke to them and ordered them to let go of the demijohn but they did not obey, but glanced up at me and still held on. I then roared out, "Let go of that demijohn," but they still held on.

63

My first impulse was to jump down into the engine room and grab a suitable stick of cord wood and lay out Indians right and left but before I could get the cord wood stick the idea flashed through my mind that the United States Government was trying to civilize those Indians and that a taste of the law would be better all around than a dose of cord wood from the hands of an angry man, so I just remarked, "alright" and went to the Pilot house and rang for full speed a stern and turned and headed for the dock at Walker.

On the way back to the dock, a half breed named Billy McDonald came up into the wheel house and began giving me some advice in regard to the best way to settle the affair. He told me that the best way would be to run directly to the Agency and let the Indian Agent settle the matter.

I replied that he must think that I was a fool to talk to me in that way.

I told him that I did not know what that demijohn contained, but that I strongly suspected that it held whiskey and I knew what the law was in regard to taking liquor in any form onto the reservation and that I did not propose to get into any such mess.

I also told him that I had a plan in my mind that would beat his by a long shot.

When we came within hailing distance of the dock, I called and asked if there was anyone there and was answered by a young man named Howard Airway. I asked him if he would go and find the Village Marshal and tell him that I would like for him to come down to the dock.

He immediately hurried away to find him.

Library of Congress

Before reaching the dock one of the tourists made the remark that as soon as the boat reached the dock the Indians who had made the trouble would vamoose.

A partner of his answered that he would see that they did not and picking up an axe from their pile of stuff and taking a position on the bow of the boat he stated in no uncertain terms that any Indian that undertook to pass him would be split. It is unnecessary to say that none attempted the feat.

The village marshal soon came and I stated the case to him as briefly as possible and he said, "point out the disturbers." I asked the tourists to point out the men that had caused the trouble and they selected three, one of whom I knew was not guilty but as it was Billy McDonald who had been so plentiful with his advice which, had I followed, would have gotten me into all kinds of trouble, I did not feel like acting as his attorney and I thought a night in the cooler would not hurt him much anyway, so the marshal started for his hostelry with his three prisoners while Billy Mack was protesting that he was not guilty yet he went all the same.

Having ended the trouble, as I supposed we ran to the point and unloaded the men and their stuff, including the three gallon demijohn, and then ran to the Agency.

64

There were three of us constituting the crew, the engineer, Johnnie Dean and a young man named Orville Spencer and myself. I was acting as wheelsman.

On the way over to the Agency I had Spencer take the wheel while I collected the fares.

After taking the fares of those on the forward deck I went back to the cabin where I found Mr. William Bonga, a mixed blood Indian, and a young woman that I think was his daughter with her young children. This Mr. Bonga, who kept a small store at the Agency, was a descendent of Jean Bonga, a negro slave of Captain Daniel Robertson, a British officer who brought Jean Bonga and his negro wife to Mackinaw in 1782. Bonga's children

Library of Congress

intermarried with the Chippewas and a great many of the Indians, especially those around the Agency, are darkened by the admixture of negro blood, while the pure blood Indians are lighter complexioned.

While I was taking Mr. Bonga's fare, I noticed that he was very much perturbed over something for when he gave me the two fares in small change, he gave me entirely too much and I returned him the surplus.

He acted as if he had something on his mind that he wanted to tell me but dared not.

Before we reached the landing at the Agency the Chief of Police blew a shrill blast on a whistle and as soon as the boat struck the shore about a dozen or fifteen Indians swarmed aboard and entered into an animated conversation the nature of which I could not understand as I was not conversant with the Chippewa language.

I was leaning out of the window of the Pilot house watching for the passengers in the cabin to go ashore and was wondering what was detaining them.

Suddenly a young mixed blood, named William Warren, a grand-son of the William Warren who was a member of the Minnesota Territorial Legislature of an early date and was also the author of "Warren's History of the Ojibways," spoke to me and said, "Captain, the Chief of Police would like to have a little talk with you."

I stepped out of the Pilot House and walked to the front of the upper deck and asked, "What does he want." He replied, "He wants you to come down on the lower deck so that he can have a little talk," Warren said. I instantly divined something sinister and should, if I had not been foolishly foolhardy, promptly declined the invitation.

But as I did not think that I had done anything wrong and also did not want them to think that I was afraid of them, I promptly went down and walked up to the Chief of Police who stood in the center of his gang of retainers and inquired what he wanted.

Library of Congress

Warren answered that the Chief wanted me to accompany him up to his office.

I told him that if the Chief wanted to talk to me he could do so right 65 there just as well as he could up at his office. Warren replied that if I did not go willingly that he, the Chief, would take me anyhow.

I instantly realized how foolish I had been to walk right into a bunch of about twenty Indians, but I replied, "I am not going," and started to turn, when every Indian who could manage to get a hold on me, did so.

There were three who had their arms around me pinioning my arms to my chest so tight that I could scarcely breathe.

As I was unable to move much less to strike, the only thing that I could do was to talk so I called to the engineer "back her off". He, it seems, had sized up the situation and exhibited more genuine common sense than his boss, and was already with engines reversed and his hand on the throttle expecting every instant to receive the order, which he now received and immediately executed.

In a few seconds the engines were going full speed astern and the boat was trembling and vibrating but it did not come off the large boulders that lined the shore and on which the steel clad bow rested. The added weight of those twelve or fifteen Indians who had come aboard as we landed, held her and it looked as if she was going to stay there.

Suddenly an Indian's voice rang out, "You can't back her off!"

Then such a fiendish yell went up, such as I had never heard before and do not expect to hear again.

Library of Congress

I do not wonder that Braddock's regulars on that memorable 9th of June 1755, when they first heard the Indian war whoop, acted as though Satan himself was at their heels. It is the most blood curdling noise that ever originated outside of hades.

But their yell of triumph was a little premature, they were not yet quite out of the woods for before the echoes of that yell had died away the steamer came off the rocks and as she came off something happened that neither the Indians nor myself had anticipated, for at the instant that she came off there was a tremendous explosion in the engine room and the hot steam came rushing out of the front doors and enveloped us in a cloud of hot, blinding vapor. I instantly knew what had happened but my would be captors did not and it frightened them.

The "pop" safety valve on my boiler would, sometimes, when the boat was at rest, stick to the valve seat so that the steam pressure in the boiler would run up a little above where it was set to blow off at but I had never known it before to exceed five pounds but at this particular time I think it must have gone ten pounds or more above and the jar of the boat coming off the rocks had set it off.

As the hot steam enveloped us, I noticed that loving embrace in which I was held seemed to slacken and I was not slow in taking advantage of it and broke loose and lowering my head I went through the crowd foot hall style and managed to get clear, and running back along the deck to the stern I mounted the railing and climbed to the upper deck and ran forward 66 to the Pilot House and took my place at the wheel.

By this time the boat was out some distance from shore and had swung around so she was headed out into the bay.

As I had about twenty or more Indians on board and not needing them to help run things and also knowing that after recovering from their panic they could, if so disposed, overpower us three and then succeed in what they had attempted to do, so I instantly

Library of Congress

thought of a plan whereby I might get rid of a part, if not all of them, so I allowed the boat to swing on around until she was heading toward the shore. Then I rang to go ahead and started to return to the landing.

I let her go in pretty fast, more so than if I was intending to stay there and a few seconds before she struck I signalled, "full speed astern."

My engineer, Johnnie Dean, was right on time and before she struck the engines were pulling astern at their full capacity.

The consequence was that when she struck those rocks with her steel clad bow she did not stay more than an instant and immediately began to back out into the bay once more.

Just before she struck the rocks, I leaned out of the front of the Pilot house and in the most savage voice that I could command roared out, "Get off of there, every one of you."

It would certainly have been fun for even a disinterested person and was doubly so to myself to see those Indians go over the bow of that boat into the water.

They reminded me of a flock of sheep going over the side of a bridge or some other place, where the foolish leader had gone. The first one or two, I think, landed without getting their feet wet.

They were probably more scared or else had more sense than the others who hesitated before taking the plunge. Each went deeper and deeper as the boat receded from shore until the tail ender, a fellow named Jim Taylor, and who, by the way, was the third member of the trio who were cuddling that demijohn and caused the trouble, he went in to his neck.

I do not think he suffered any ill effects from his bath, in fact as I was well acquainted with his personal habits I believe it was a positive benefit.

Library of Congress

But they did not all go as I hoped they would. The Chief of Police, William Martin, and three of his faithful retainers seemed to think that it was beneath their dignity to depart in such an unceremonious manner, and so accompanied us back to Walker.

On the way back, one of them tried to induce me to land and let them off but as they had not seen fit to land when I had given them the opportunity to do so, I did not feel like going to any trouble to please them, in fact, the thought of what they had tried to do to me after I had given them free passage on my boat so many times, and then for them to do the way they tried to do, when all that I did was to protect my patrons, made me feel so that when we arrived at Walker I was not in a very pleasant frame of mind, but before I could get down to the lower deck, the Chief of Police and two of his men had disappeared. Probably fearing that I would get the Village Marshall after them.

When I went into the cabin, one of them was still there and I recognized him as one of the trio in whose loving embrace I had been a short time previously. I walked up to him and proceeded to tell him in no uncertain language, what would happen to him if he ever laid hands on me again.

He cringed and bowed and with a string of "kawins" endeavored to make me believe that he was not implicated or else would never do so again.

I learned afterward that the Chief of Police had ordered those men to sieze the demijohn and that was the reason that they would not obey me when I ordered them to let go of it.

I had no time for that Chief of Police after than, but after the fight at Sugar Point and when I was bringing General Bacon and his troops to Walker, they told me how the Chief of Police, who was assisting them in arresting the Indians wanted by the United States Government, when the firing commenced, and the bullets were whistling and the men were falling, had neither ran nor took cover, but stood like a statue, which made me feel

Library of Congress

different toward him and at the first opportunity I walked up to him and offered him my hand, which he immediately took and we became friends again.

The next day after the affair of the demijohn, word came from the agency that it would be best for me to discontinue my regular trips for a while until the excitement had subsided a little.

As I did not consider that I was in any way to blame for what had occurred, I resolved to pay no attention to it and run my regular trips just as though nothing had happened, so when my turn came I went over as usual but took the precaution to be prepared to defend myself if attacked.

I had in the right hand pocket of my pants what my little son Vern termed my "Indian Whacker", which consisted of a lump of lead the size and shape of a hens egg, attached to a stout buckskin thong with a loop in one end through which I slipped my hand.

I had also, in my hip pocket, a 38 gun which I did not intend to use unless to save my own life.

I ran over as usual and was the first man ashore. I had my "whacker" in my hnd inside my pocket, all ready for business but I am glad to say that I was not interfered with in any way and afterward things went on as usual.

I learned afterward that all they wanted to do with me was to put me in their lockup and keep me until the men taken by the Marshal at Walker were released and had returned to the Agency.

CHAPTER XIV Dead Man's Spur

During the spring and summer of 1895 the Brainerd Lumber Company were busily engaged in grading and building an elaborate network of railway tracks between

Library of Congress

Shingobee bay, Leech Lake, Lake May, Long Lake and several more of that chain extending southwest of Walker.

Any person whose mind is interested in tracks and trails can still trace out those old embankments, one of which still retains its sinister name acquired in the early summer of 1895.

The Brainerd Lumber Company in building those lines of track had in their employ a number of contractors whose camps were located in the following places: Williams Burns, who built the big bridge at the entrance of Shingobee Bay had his first camp a short distance west of the north end of the bridge, was the first to commence operations; the next was Wordenhoff whose camp was located on the first point of land north of the bridge; the next was P. P. Johnson on the second point (Fisher's Point I think it is now called); the next was John Dahlbergs which was located on the southwest side of a little pond which lies about a mile southwest of the Sanatorium and just a little east of old "19".

A short distance northwest of Dahlbergs camp the spur which afterward received the sinister name branched off from the main line and after making some turns came out to the crest of Shingobee bluff about one half mile northeast from where it left the main line.

About the first of July 1895 a young man named William McDonald who had been working at Wm. Burns second camp which was located on Long Lake, southwest of where Walker now is located, decided to quit and take up a homestead up kabekona river.

I was not personally acquainted with him but from a description of him given me by parties who were, I believe that he was about as near a perfect specimen of physical humanity as was ever seen in these parts.

Standing six feet in his socks and weighing about 240 pounds a mass of bone and muscle and but twenty-four years of age.

Library of Congress

As he was intending to take a homestead he needed some provisions. He accompanied a teamster known by the euphonius name of "Balky Tom", to the town of Lothrup to do his trading and get such supplies as he needed. "Balky Tom" was expected to bring a load of supplies for the camp. 69 Lothrup t the present time is an exceedingly hard town to find as the last house disappeared long years ago and no one but one of the few "old-timers" who are still left could locate the place where it once stood.

At the time when McDonald and "Balky Tom" visited it there were a small railroad station, railroad repair shop, three hotels, several stores, one house of ill fame, one saloon run by James J. Frost and a drug store owned and run by Doctor Bain who was also either coroner or deputy coroner, I forget which.

"Doc" Bain had quite a lucrative position as he could sell them the stuff to make them sick then doctor them until they were well if he reached them in time, but if they were dead when he arrived he could empanel a jury and decide the cause of their sudden taking off. In any of the three ways there was money coming to his pocket.

When McDonald and "Balky" arrived at Lothrup they loaded up their supplies and then proceeded to celebrate as it was so near the Fourth of July.

The canny Scot did not patronize the saloon but went to "Doc" Bain and the "Doc" prescribed for his special case a quart of alcohol to be diluted and taken at intervals as the patient desired.

"Balky Tom" also visited Bain's drug store and purchased a pint of carbolic acid to be used on an injured mule at camp. I neglected to state in its proper place that McDonald had purchased a pint flask to dilute his medicine in.

Just how long McDonald and "Balky" remained in town I do not know, but "Balky" arrived at camp at midnight alone and when the camp crew went to unload the supplies they discovered that the supplies were already unloaded as the hind endgate of the wagon

Library of Congress

box had not been replaced properly and the groceries had been distributed along the nine miles of highway between Lothrop and camp.

McDonald did not appear but nothing was thought of that as he was supposed to have gone direct to his claim after parting from "Balky" near Dahlberg's camp. Two or three days later a cruiser happening to pass along this spur found McDonald's body lying dead near the end of the spur terminating at the top of the Shingobee bluff. A few feet from the body lay the bottle of carbolic acid minus a small part of its contents. After taking a drink of the poison McDonald had replaced the cork, dropped the bottle, walked a few steps and had fallen dead.

When he and "Balky" had parted a short time previously he had gotten the mule medicine in place of his own.

The coroner. "Doc" Bain was notified and after viewing the remains he decided that an inquest was unnecessary and was a case of accidental death.

I talked with Bain afterwards and he told me that McDonald's body was a perfect mass of maggots, the only portion that was free of them was the mouth and throat where the carbolic acid still was doing its work.

The mode of his sepulture was quite primitive, a shallow pit at the foot of the railroad embankment was scooped out and what was left of him was thrown on to a horse blanket, was snaked to the pit, placed therein and some earth shoveled over his remains.

On the north side of the spur at its end stood a large white pine tree on whose base was nailed a white pine board bearing the following legend "William McDonald died July 3, 1895."

About one year later my son Arthur L. Dally of Laporte, then being a small boy was hunting for my horses that were pasturing in the vicinity of that spur, when he encountered as he

Library of Congress

state it "the most awful smell that he had ever smelt" which on tracing it to its source he found emanated from the foot of the railroad embankment where he found that some small animal (probably a skunk) had been doing some excavating and had exposed a shoe and also some of the bones of a man.

He reported his find to the village authorities at Walker who sent a man down to repair the damage to McDonald's mausoleum, so that is the reason that a certain part of that railroad line is called "Dead Man's Spur."

But McDonald was not the only man who sleeps in an unmarked grave in the vicinity of Walker.

A short time previous to McDonald's death, a man working for P. P. Johnson went to Lothrop, filled up on rot-gut, came back to camp and died that night and was buried near where the Great Northern depot now stands.

Another who was drowned in Leech Lake before any cemetery was established was buried on the side of the bluff just above where the old "dumping grounds" were, just south of town.

The next two drownings were buried where the cemetery west of town was afterward established.

CHAPTER XV Some Early History of Lakeport Township

The first dwelling house built in what was afterward the Township of Lakeport, Hubbard County, was erected by two brothers, John and Robert Cline, in the early summer of 1895.

It was built of logs and stood on a peninsula of dry land that juts out from the east into the valley of the Kabekona river about ½ mile from its mouth.

Library of Congress

I well remember the day about the 20th of May, 1895, as my crew and I were at work on my steamer, the Leila D, we saw the Longstaff and Botting scow that they were using as a ferry boat down at the big bridge, at the Shingobee, standing up the lake under a fair wind bound for the Kabekona river with the Cline outfit on board.

The old road to Red Lake passed just north of their building place and crossed the river on a pole bridge, then ran northwest near where Mr. Carlson's house now stands.

Their outfit consisted of a team, a wagon, several cows and the house hold goods of John Cline and family. They intended to go into the dairy business as there was immense quantities of grass suitable for hay growing in that vicinity. But they did not stay long as the swarms of mosquitoes and flies proved too much for their stock and one season was enough for them and their house was left for any roving hunter to occupy. The fall and winter of 1896 and 1897 it was the camp of Charlie and Orrin Potter of Park Rapids who slaughtered an immense number of deer while they stayed there.

The next building erected was put up by Harry Brumond, of Walker, and was situated where the village of Laporte now stands. Mr. Brumond was a merchant in Walker and had a good business but his greed for money prompted him to go into almost anything that promised a golden harvest, so he put up a building and started a saloon and hired a man to run it for him.

That saloon business of Brumond's was the cause of the death of two of Lakeporte's early settlers.

As the country was settling up fast, a post office had been established about, or shortly after, the time the railroad had reached the place and the first post master had it named for his wife whose name was Ann. The post master's name was Nelson Daughters, who had a homestead about a mile northwest of the railroad station, where he and his wife had their home and kept the post office.

In the spring previous to Daughters' death, his wife died and her body and that of her infant child were consigned to earth and now rest in an unmarked grave on Daughters' homestead, which was afterward the C. M. Dally farm.

Around Laporte was formerly a great place for blue berries and Seneca Snake root and the Indians from Leech lake were in the habit of gathering blueberries there and, as everybody that is acquainted with Indians knows that an average Indian will sell his soul for a drink of whiskey, it occurred to Daughters that he could get berries from the Indians easier than to pick them himself, so he bought some alcohol from Brumond's bartender and with some other stuff made a concoction that he sold to the Indians for blue berries.

The Indians, when they found out what they had been getting for their berries, complained to their Indian Agent who got the Federal officers after Daughters. A U. S. deputy marshal went up and got him and brought him down to Walker.

When he and his prisoner arrived at Walker, they descended to the depot platform, when Daughters said to the deputy, "Oh, I forgot my coat in the coach and I want to get it." The unsuspecting deputy told him, "Il right", and daughters disappeared in the coach.

After waiting a reasonable time for his prisoner to return, he went into the car to get him but he was not there. When the prisoner had gotten his coat, instead of returning to join the deputy, he went on through the car, jumped off on the opposite side, ran across the street to Brumond's store, passed through the store, went out at the rear door and broke for the woods where he was safe and afterward returned to his home.

A short distance from his house, he constructed an underground cellar which he stocked with food and water where he could stay and not be found. But he was still post master and continued to handle the mail.

Library of Congress

The railroad, by this time, had been run to Bemidji and he made arrangements with the mail clerk to throw the north bound mail off at a point a short distance southeast of the station. This arrangement continued for some time but finally his post office bondsmen, J. B. Spencer and C. E. Griffith, concluded to turn him over to the Federal officers, so they got deputy sheriff Frank Breese to go after him. Breese was afraid to undertake the job alone and took along a half crazy blacksmith by the name of Fullerton, who was a good shot with a rifle and another man named Frank Bowen to do the dangerous part of it, as the news had got out that Daughters would not be taken alive.

Breese and his posse went to Laporte and made arrangements to intercept Daughters when he received the mail at the appointed place.

Breese and Bowen remained at the station and Fullerton with his rifle all ready lay down in the ditch by the railroad track and waited for the train to pass.

73

As the train passed, the mail clerk out the sack and Daughters came down the bank to pick it up, when Fullerton called, "Throw up your hands." Instead of dropping his rifle and putting up his hands, Daughters wheeled and ran. Three shots in quick succession from Fullerton's rifle rang out and Daughters, with a bullet through his vitals, lay mortally wounded.

When Fullerton's rifle began to crack, the train had not left the station so it waited until the dying man was placed on board and was taken by the deputy sheriff to Bemidji where medical aid could be had, but he died on the train.

When the train reached Bemidji, Breeze telegraphed what had occurred and wanted to know what to do with the body. When the south bound train reached Walker next morning, there was a crowd at the depot anxious to know the particulars. I was standing just before the waiting room door when the mixed train came in.

Library of Congress

As the train came to a halt, right in front of me was an open box car door and just inside that door, on the dirty floor of the car, lay the body of Daughters.

I stood gaping at the horrid scene for perhaps a minute, then looked towards the rear of the train and saw Breese and Fullerton descending the steps of the coach. I walked up and met them and asked Fullerton how it was.

He replied that he lay in the ditch and when Daughters did not obey his order to throw up his hands but wheeled and ran, he described what happened in these words, "I fired one shot over his head to scare him, but he didn't stop, so I shot the gun out of his hands the next shot, but he still did not stop, so then I plugged him right through the body."

Fullerton's second shot had struck and knocked the gun from Daughters' hands but that was an accident for there is not one chance in a thousand that he could have repeated that feat.

Breese, when I met him there, looked pale and seemed to realize the gravity of the situation, but Fullerton acted as though he was a conquering hero in place of the slayer of an unarmed man for according to his own statement Daughters was unarmed when he, Fullerton, fired the fatal shot.

When they examined Daughters' rifle, it was found that there were no cartridges either in the barrel or magazine. He was certainly very foolish to try to run a bluff of that kind.

If Daughters had had relatives to have taken the matter up, I believe that they might have made it warm for that posse for killing an unarmed man for selling a quart of alcohol to some Indians, a crime that was repeatedly committed by nearly every man who ran a saloon or hotel bar in this upper country.

Thomas Seely, the other man who lost his life by reason of Harry Brumond's saloon, was one of the earliest settlers in the Township. He 74 had been employed by Sam Hunter,

Library of Congress

an early lumberman, and was a fine, dependable man when he was not filled up on the rotgut whiskey dispensed in those days. Tom's wife finally prevailed with him to take a homestead and quit working for other men. So he took a homestead up northwest of Garfield lake, near where Mr. Nyman now lives.

I moved him and his wife and their household goods from Walker up through Leech lake, Steamboat river and lake and then up the Necktie river to the big bend of the Necktie north of Garfield lake where Charlie Lucore had his hunting camp some years later.

My wife accompanied me on that trip, as she often did when I was going to new places, and on the way up Mrs. Seely told my wife that now she could have Tom away from the saloons for she said that there never was a better husband than Tom was when he was away from drink.

But her happiness was short lived for when Brumond started a saloon at the station and then one farther up the railroad at Spur 75. Tom had the drink brought right to him and fell in his old ways and at last, one night in the saloon at the Spur, he was shot and instantly killed by a shot from a rifle in the hands of Dick Palmer, the bartender. They claimed that it was an accident and possibly it was, but it made poor Tom's wife a widow.

It was afterwards reported by the bartender of Brumond's saloon at Laporte that Daughters was innocent of the charge of selling liquor to the Indians, but at the time it happened, Daughter's own friends acknowledged that he had done so.

This same bartender also told, years afterward, that when the south bound train bearing Daughter's body arrived at Laporte, a large body of determined men with ropes all ready were waiting at the station to hang the deputy and his posse but the deputy being forewarned of what was impending, did not return on the train carrying Daughters' dead body but returned to Walker by the Great Northern by way of Cass Lake and then to Walker by rail.

Library of Congress

It is hard for the average individual to make up a story in which dates are involved without betraying its falsity by an anachronism and so it was in this case for the Great Northern railroad connecting Walker with Cass Lake was not built until some time after the tragedy of Daughters' death had occurred.

At an Old Settlers meeting, held several years ago in Child's Grove, Miss Rena Stuart read an historical sketch on the early settlement of Laporte which was very interesting but she had gotten some of her data from the individual who formerly was Brumond's bar tender and his false story was incorporated in her history.

The Stuart family were not living here at the time of the Daughters tragedy, so Miss Stuart had to depend on others for data and consequently was not to blame for any inaccuracy but merited praise for trying to keep the early history of the village from being consigned to oblivion.

THE "LEILA D," (Captain "Nate" Dally)

Which brought off General Bacon and his troops after the battle of Sugar Point.

The "Leila D" was the first steamboat built and run by a private individual on Leech lake. She was built during the spring of 1895 at the "shipyard" in the west end of the village.

CHAPTER XVI Steamboating on Leech Lake in the Early Days

During the thirteen years from 1895 to 1908, in which I operated a steamboat on Leech Lake I had many pleasant experiences and formed many pleasant acquaintanceships, to which I now look back upon with great pleasure. Most of the men with whom I had business transactions, were honorable men who would do as they agreed in every way.

Library of Congress

And also, among the tourists, I had many friends whom I welcomed back each succeeding summer as they came from their homes in this and neighboring states to enjoy themselves on the beautiful waters and shores of Leech Lake.

Among the many people that I carried on my boat there are a few names that stand out prominently in my memory among which are the names of Dr. Leonard, from Kansas City, Mo., and Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Morris, and their daughter, Mrs. Kendrick, and their neice, Miss Molly Morris, of St. Louis, Mo., and a great many others too numerous to mention who yearly came to Walker for their summer vacation.

The first man to run an excursion to Leech Lake was M. K. Schwartz, a druggist of Brainerd, Minnesota, who hired a passenger train of the N. P. Railway and ran it up to the then end of the track at the east end of the big bridge, near the State Sanatorium, or rather where it is now.

It was in July 1895, and I had jut got my steamboat running and I carried most of the excursionists to the old Agency across the bay northeast of where Onigum now stands.

His excursion was a success as it was the first chance for the people of Brainerd and vicinity to visit Leech Lake.

A short time afterward a lot of the business men of Brainerd got up another but it was not as much of a success as the first one.

Shortly after that I got a job of hauling about one hundred and twenty thousand feet of square timber to be used in the rebuilding of Federal Dam on Leech river about three miles below the outlet of Leech Lake. It was brought from the State of Washington on the Northern Pacific Railway and then on the Brainerd and Northern to the east end of the big bridge and left there until the section crew had laid the rails a short distance out on the bridge to enable me to unload the timber in the water to be made into rafts.

Library of Congress

I have the honor of having run the first car that was ever run out on that bridge. The timbers that I was taking over there were Douglas Fir, 77 six by twelve inches square and twenty-four feet long and it was the finest lot of stock that I ever saw. I made it into three rafts put together with eight and ten inch boat spikes furnished by the Brainerd and Northern railroad company and were returned to them after I had finished the job.

The first raft I spiked every timber, the second every alternate timber and the third every third timber, as I found there was no need of spiking them all.

While we were engaged at the timber a lot of the White Oak Point band of Chippewa Indians came up Leech River on the "North Star", a stern wheel steamer run by Captain Johnnie Lyons, a mixed blood.

Of course the steamer had to stop at the dam and the most of the Indians came across Leech Lake in their birch bark canoes but as Lyons was in a hurry to return he and his family came back with us so that he could hurry the Indians up and get them to return on my boat, which about eighty of them did.

On the way back to Leech River we had to buck a head wind which increased in violence so we had to stop at Isle Two Points as our supply of wood was about exhausted, so we ran in under the shelter of the island and the Indians camped on the island all night.

When we went in and tied up to the shore I was afraid that the wind might shift from the east to the south and drive us on the rocks so I took the anchor and put it out to the south to hold the stern off in case that it did shift and it was lucky that I did as it swung to the south during the night and the big waves drove the bow of the boat up on the large boulders so much that I was afraid that it might be damaged, so I took a three by twelve inch pine plank and put it between the boat and the rocks and chained it fast, but it soon broke in two and the bow of the boat was thrown upon a large rock where it remained until the wind subsided, which it did the next morning when we pried her off and getting

Library of Congress

our passengers on board we ran down to the outlet where the Indians took their thirteen canoes which had been trailing behind and resumed their journey down the river to the dam, where they boarded the North Star for their homes at White Oak Point on the Mississippi river, while we resumed our job of rafting timber.

While engaged in that we stayed one night at Isle Two Points and while there I found a stone pine that I believe was very ancient.

While walking along an old trail that ran paralell to the shore and which had probably been used by the Indians for hundreds or maybe for thousands of years I noticed in the hard beaten track a peculiar looking stone, that looked like a chain link.

I took a stick and dug it out and it proved to be an Indian pipe made of dark, nearly a black, stone and it had laid there and had been walked over by the moccasined feet of countless generations until it had been worn through exposing the hole through which the owner drew the smoke of his Kinnikinnik in an age long past.

That pipe is now a small part of the collection of the State Historical 78 Society and I have grave doubts of there being an older one in that collection.

I have also found two iron or steel axes which were probably made by the early French blacksmiths as they are of a very peculiar pattern.

I found one of them on Goose Island and the other one on the Sand Point about five miles north of Walker, where I also found an old gun barrel. Speaking of gun barrels recalls to my mind one that was found bar Walker by a boy name Peter Wold, which barrel had been cut off and then a small piece of the upper surface had been chipped up so as to form a front sight. I believe that this barrel was one of those that the Indians cut off so that their women could hide the guns under their blankets when the Indians surprised and took Mackanach from the British troops in the year 1763. When out of ninety soldiers composing the garrison seventy were slaughtered by the Chippewas and Ottawas who

Library of Congress

were playing a matched game of baughattaway, or as it is now known as LaCrosse, as a blind to enable them to surprise the garrison.

After completing the timber job we had but little work to do with the boat that season except hauling a lot of hay that Indians had made and sold to the railroad contractors so we pulled the boat out and laid her up for the winter.

A short time previously I had sent for my family to come up and we were preparing to spend the winter there but having a lot of saw bills due me at Eagle Bend and finding it impossible to collect them we returned to Eagle Bend for the winter.

The next spring, in April, when we returned, we found in place of one small log hut occupied by the James Anway family which we had left the fall before, a town with two large hotels, several stores, a brick drug store being built and, I am sorry to say, several saloons.

I bought a lot near where the new Chase Hotel now stands and put up a house to live in.

We put the boat in the water and one of the first trips that we made if I remember correctly was to Sugar Point, after some potatoes for H. Brummund, one of the merchants of Walker.

While the Indians were loading the potatoes my engineer and I took in a medicine dance or ceremony that was in progress near where we landed. To anyone who has never seen one, an account of one may be interesting.

An enclosure about fifty or sixty feet long and fifteen or twenty feet wide had been made of brush stuck in the ground, forming a fence or wall about three feet high, with an opening or gateway at each end and a line of posts with a ridge pole through the center lengthwise on which were hung from one end to the other of the pole all the bright colored blankets quilts and finery of different kinds.

Library of Congress

About the center lengthwise was a small covered enclosure that seemed to have a single occupant, while near the eastern gateway was a small fire 79 around which sat four old men, one of whom I was acquainted with, whose name was "Songacumig," or in English, "Strong Ground", who as I passed along arose and shook hands with me over the low wall of the enclosure.

On the outside at each gateway lay the dead body of a large dog, which although dead, was securely tied with basswood bark. Whenever any of the other dogs of the neighborhood came near the Indian boys would pelt them with stones and send them ki-yi-ing about their business.

Part of the ceremony was marching around on the inside of the enclosure of a small part of the company, led by a tall man who carried in front of him on his flexed arms something which I was unable to discern the nature of, but it looked like a shell of some kind over which he after marching around, stopped and delivered an oration for a short time.

If I had not been afraid of offending them I would have like to have observed the whole thing from a nearby standpoint, but as I knew that it was a religious ceremony I was afraid of offending them by using too curious.

Many, if not all, of the Indians participating were painted in highly fantastic style in about all the colors of the rainbow.

I would have liked to have seen the whole thing, from start to finish, but as soon as our cargo was loaded we pulled out for Walker.

Some years afterward they had a similar performance near the same place and while it was going on I took a party of people from St. Joseph, Mo., over to the Sugar Point Battle Ground.

Library of Congress

There were about twenty in the party, one of whom was a banker, reputed to be a millionaire.

They hired me to take them to Bear Island and Sugar Point where they had intended to eat their dinner or in present parlance, their lunch.

When we arrived at the battle ground, they took their lunch baskets and pails and went ashore.

As I was acting as engineer and had some duties to attend to I did not accompany them and in a short time was surprised to see them returning to the boat.

When they came on board they told me that an old Indian had ordered them of the premises. I immediately went up to where he was and found old "Red Hair", an older brother of Bug-en-e-gesig. I walked up to and greeted him and asked him how much. He answered "Nish-wabick". I handed him a dollar and he waved his hand to indicate that we were at liberty to roam around and look things over.

I then bid him good day and returned to the steamer where I found the party eating their dinner on the foreward deck and they had as a guest an old Indian whom I was not acquainted with.

If ever an Indian got filled up that old fellow did.

The members of the party seemed to think that it was a great honor to have him as a guest and kept passing him dish after dish and as it seems 80 to be against an average Indian's principles to refuse anything of food kind that is offered him, that chap certainly got the fill of his life.

After the Indian could hold no more and the rest of the party were satisfied we went over to the battle field and on down to Bug-en-a-gesig's new cabin that he built after the trouble

Library of Congress

was over as he did not want to live in his old house where there had been so much blood shed so he had made him a new home about forty rods east of his old one.

When we arrived at the cabin a lady in the party noticed an Eagle feather suspended from a pole attached to the gable end of the cabin and there did not appear to be anyone at the cabin, so she told her ten year old son to climb up on the roof and get her that feather. I did not think that the Nish-wabick that I had given Red Hair entitled them to take anything that they took a fancy to so I turned to the lady and said to her, "Excuse me, madam, but my advice to you would be to let that feather strictly alone as we do not know but what our every move is being watched and it might not be well for the person interferring with that feather."

She seemed to see the force of my argument as she did not insist on having that feather.

While there we learned of the Medicine Dance that was going on down the shore north and they wanted me to run down there so they could witness it.

The place where it was being held was about seventy or eighty rods north of the point and was on a nice smooth level place about ten feet above the water level with a steep bank almost precipitous, except in one place where the Indians had a trail where they landed their canoes.

We ran in at the place and were met by a lot of Indians who ranged themselves along the top of the bank in a line so as to shut off access to the plain above.

I went ashore with some of the party and asked the Indians, "How much for the party?" They answered two dollars. I supposed that they would willingly pay that amount as it was only ten cents apiece, but one of the party spoke up and said that as the captain had already paid one dollar that should satisfy them, but the Indians could not see it in that light and I did not blame them, so I turned and went back on the boat and left them to settle it themselves.

Library of Congress

As I was returning I met one of the party who was coming ashore with a large camera which he proceeded to set up preparatory to taking a picture of the scene but just as he was getting his tripod set up among the boulders old Red Hair, although upwards of eighty years of age, came down over those boulders as spry as a young buck and seized the would-be photographer by the shoulder, swung him around and pointed his finger at the gang plank, then told him in Indian to get, which he proceeded to do, but when he reached the friendly deck, he proceeded to take his picture from there.

I went into the engine room and went to work at something that needed my attention and left the tourists and Indians to settle it as they could.

Part of Walker, Minnesota Lake Front in 1897. A Section From Where the Village Dock Now is, to the Mouth of the Creek.

82

After a while, as I was busy at work one of the gentlemen came down into the engine room and said to me, "Would it not be advisable for some arrangements to be made so that we can see the show?" That made me hot and I turned on him and said, "So you want me to pay your way in do you?"

He replied, "Who asked you to pay any money?"

I replied, "No one, but I know that making arrangements with Indians means money."

As he did not volunteer to furnish the funds I kept on at my work and let them as the boys say 'chew the rag' to their hearts content. But as both sides remained obdurate they finally came away without seeing the show rather than give up two cartwheels.

As I only received ten dollars for the thirty-six mile trip and had already given old Red Hair one dollar of that in order that they might visit the battle field I did not consider it my duty to do any more in the line.

Library of Congress

I remember another incident where the pickaunishness of some rich people showed itself.

One day as my boat was lying at the dock at Walker waiting for a job to turn up a gentleman approached and asked me if I was the owner of the boat and upon receiving an affirmative answer he stated that he and a party of others wished to visit Minnesota Island the following day to take dinner there and wanted to be taken there in the morning, left there during the day and then have the boat return for them and take them off in the evening and he wished to know what my charge would be for the two trips.

As the tourist business was rather slack at that time and there were three other boats lying at the dock waiting for a job I knew that it would be necessary for me to name a rock-bottom price or I would not get the job, so I asked him how many persons would comprise the party and he replied that there would be seventeen in the party, so I told him that I would charge them six dollars for the two trips which would involve a run of thirty-two miles.

“Six dollars”, he replied in a tone of outraged surprise. Then he said, “That is just the reason that this town is not patronized more, you boatmen charge such outrageous prices for what you do that people cannot afford to pay them. No, I can never give six dollars for a job like that.”

I then asked him what he would consider the proper charge.

He replied that four dollars would be about right I told him that was too cheap for me and he went on to try someone else.

I watched him as he interviewed each boatman in turn, but he did not seem to get any satisfaction.

Library of Congress

While he was thus engaged a man came along and inquired of me whether I would be up steamboat River way the next day and told me there were fifteen men at Dahlberg's camp who desired to come down.

It flashed through my mind that I could combine the two trips and come 83 out even by accepting his offer of four dollars. So when he again appeared I told him an answer to his inquiry that I would accept his offer.

He then arranged for me to beat the dock of the Lakeview Hotel at nine o'clock the next day.

That evening I told my wife that I intended to go up to Steamboat Landing the next morning and asked her if she did not want to go along. As she often accompanied me on such trips but I did not think to tell her of the party of rich folks that I was to take to Minnesota Island where we were to leave them on our way up and so when we ran in to the hotel dock the next morning and those ladies came down dressed in their silks and satins my wife felt out of place as she had contemplated only seeing common people.

Well, we went up to the island and on the way up I wondered what had possessed them to want a picnic on that island as it is nearly all wet marsh and the one or two acres of it that approached dryness was covered with a wilderness of brush and vine that would require a Philipino with a machete to make a trail through.

Well, when we arrived at the driest part of the island, I turned in towards shore and the gentleman who had engaged me instantly inquired, "What are you going in here for?"

I replied that as he had engaged me to land him on Minnesota Island and as that part of it was the nearest dry I supposed it was there where he wanted to land. He seemed horrified at the thought of landing in that hole and I did not blame him so when he told me that they did not want to land there and wanted to know if there was not a place on the main land farther north where they could find a good place to stop. I assured him that I knew of such

Library of Congress

a place about a half mile farther on so I landed him there at an old Indian's camping place where there was plenty of shade with a grass sward underneath.

We then ran on up to Steamboat Landing and took dinner there and also got eight passengers there and then returning to Dahlberg's camp where we took on sixteen men and then came on down to where we had left our tourists.

As it was not yet four o'clock the time that they set for me to call and get them I was doubtful whether they would be ready to start for Walker so I held my course just as if I was going right on to Walker. When they saw that I was not turning in to get them they began to swing their hats and beckon me to come in which was just what I was hoping for and took them on board and they seemed to be very much pleased with their trip and I received twelve dollars in fares instead of four and only ran the same distance that I would have run to have made the two trips for them alone.

CHAPTER XVII Some of Leech Lake's Beauty Spots

When I came to Leech Lake in March, 1895, there were many beautiful and romantic scenes that were later ruined by the despoiling ax of the lumberman. Between Lake May and Leech Lake, along the old beaten trail, trodden by the Anishinabes for a century and a half, and very probably by the Dakotahs for a much longer period, there were growing, at that time, a number of beautiful White Pine trees that had grown in the open and were limbed from near the ground clear to the top.

When I first beheld them I thought that they were the most beautiful white pine trees that I had ever seen. Some of the first settlers at Walker no doubt remember them.

This manner of growth made them of no value for lumber and of little account for fuel. There they stood, admired by all beholders until, if I remember correctly, in February, 1898, T. B. Walker sent a gang of lumber jacks, under his foreman, Frank Kline, with orders to cut every pine tree in and near the town. When the residents of Walker bought

Library of Congress

their lots of the Leech Lake Land Co., they supposed that they owned the few scattering trees and shrubs that were growing thereon, but they soon learned different, they learned that when Walker sold the land comprising the town-site to the Leech Lake Land Co., he had reserved the timber and now proceeded to cut it off. Well, what a howl went up. The outraged citizens became so warm that Kline, not liking the idea of possibly wearing a hemp necktie, suddenly thought he was needed somewhere else and jumped a train and went where he thought it was more healthy.

But they did not cut all the trees in town. J. B. Spencer had two trees on his lot and when T. B's gang appeared, he went out and told them that he had a Winchester rifle and a box of cartridges in his hotel and that the first man that put an ax into one of those trees would get the benefit of them.

One of the Jacks remarked that "that was pretty plain talk." J. B. told him that it was no plainer than what he would do if necessary. After conferring together a short time they went off and did not return.

A party of them also visited D. L. Bush, of the Lake View Hotel and were proceeding to cut several Norway Pine that stood on his lots. Bush had been a lumberman himself and had also been a Captain of Volunteers in the Civil War and it did not take him long to tell those Jacks where they were at," so they left him alone. But others were not so fortunate.

85

Walter Spencer was absent and his two trees went down, but he threatened suit and they settled, paying him, if I remember correctly, \$50.00 a tree, trail went down and as they were worthless for lumber, they were left to rot wher they fell.

It does seem, that any man would have civic pride enough, after a town had been named in his honor, to have left a few shade trees.

Library of Congress

Some one wrote and published an article, in one of the Walker papers, excusing Mr. Walker for destroying the shade trees in the town, stating that the residents were cutting the trees for fuel, but I am certain that there was no truth in that statement, but I know that people did take the limbs and tops that were left after the timber had been removed, and I also know of an instance when Fletcher Walker and his cruiser, W. W. Woolf, found a ten year old boy hauling a one horse sled load of dry limbs from the T. B. Walker land west of town and they made the kid unload the limbs and leave them to be burned with the rest of the millions of cords of such stuff that went to waste in the wake of the lumbering operations in that vicinity.

When I first came to Leech Lake, I found an old road that left the Brainerd and Leech Lake Agency road, near ten Mile Lake, and ran northwest and crossed the Shingobee on a bridge near where it entered Shingobee bay, where a dam was afterwards built by lumbermen. After crossing Shingobee the road ran northeast, past where the "San" buildings now stand, to a point a little northwest of where the railroad station now stands. There it forked, one branch running close to the lake, and the other turned northwest and ran up over the high hill north of the "San", descended the hill and crossed the little brook that runs from those springs that arise in that marshy pool at the foot of the hill. The road then ran over the hills, northwest, to the outlet of Lake May, and then on northwest to the outlet of Kabekona lake, then on northwest. Who made it or just when it was made I never learned, but it undoubtedly was intended for a dry land route to Red Lake, but there was no indication that it had ever been used by wagons any farther north than near Lake May. It was certainly not in use in the autumn of 1870, for at that time, one of my brothers, Melville B. Dally, who lately died at Fort Dodge, Iowa, was with a wagon train of six teams, owned by Reuben Corbett, of St. Cloud, who had a contract to haul a lot of goods for the U.S. Government, from St. Cloud to Red Lake Agency.

At that time a steamboat belonging to the government was in operation on Leech Lake, and it took the six wagons and 12 horses and mules from the Old Agency to the east end

Library of Congress

of Steamboat lake, making two trips to do so. They landed the wagons, horses and goods at a place about 60 rods north of the outlet of Steamboat lake, a few east of a spring of water that flows out of the bank of the lake.

My brother, at that time, was 20 years old and had never been away from home a week at a time in his and when the boss detailed him to stay and watch the first boat load of stuff to keep the Indians from stealing it while they returned for the second boat load, and as he knew that they could not return until the next day, he afterwards told me that he felt decidedly lonesome, after they had departed, but just before darkness fell an Indian came and camped near him, so he was not entirely alone and the next day a young man named Warren arrived from Lake, with a yoke of oxen to help them, as the roads were in a terrible condition.

When my brother got back home after that trip he was not exceedingly anxious to start on another like it.

Well, I started out to write about some of the beauty spots in the vicinity of old Leech Lake and have branched off on Tracks and Trails and will now try and stick to my subject.

Down northwest of the "San", at the foot of the big hill is a small pond that place I thought that it was one of the most lovely and romantic scenes that I had ever looked upon. On the west side of the pool was a little meadow of short grass interspersed with the vines of the low cranberry (*Oxycoccus Palustris*) with their beautiful red berries which make such fine sauce.

Just back of the meadow the spruce and tamarac sloped gradually upward, being small next the meadow, then rose higher and higher until they merged into the forest. This meadow was two or three feet higher than the surface of the water in the pool and in this meadow, a short distance from the pool, was a curious spring that was about two feet in diameter and extended downward into the bog in an sloping direction some six or seven

Library of Congress

feet and the water was so clear that a person could look right down into the ground to the bottom.

There was another curious spring in what was formerly known as Lake Linda, near where Merritt Lodge is now located.

This spring in Lake Linda, if I remember correctly, is situated a short distance southwest of an island in the lake and the spring arises in about three feet of water and it has thrown up a truncated cone composed of some white material to within a few inches on the surface of the lake, the cone sloping both inside and out. My wife was with me when I first discovered it and she named it the 'Water Volcano'.

The creek that issues from this lake runs into Leech Lake just a short distance southwest of Pipe Island. As we were ascending this creek in a row boat I noticed some clams among the stones on the creek bottom and as they resembled the "Niggerhead" clams of the southern rivers I finished up about a dozen of them and when we returned to my steamboat at the mouth of the creek I dissected the claims and found three small pearls, two of which were about the size of small wheat grains while the third was a much larger specimen, it being formed of three pearls connected together in line, two of them globular and the third, the center one, being elongated. My wife kept them for many years and I still have them.

Lake Linda, at that time, was beautiful sheet of water, with its surroundings of Cedar, Spruce and tamarac. I have not seen it for over thirty years and do not know in what condition the lumbermen left it.

GEN. JOHN M. BACON Who Commanded at the Battle of Sugar Point.

CHAPTER XVIII The Battle at Sugar Point and What Led Up To It

Library of Congress

The U. S. Government in their dealings with the Indians very wisely endeavored to keep all intoxicating liquor away from them, for as bad as intemperance is for the white man, it is doubly so for the Indians.

But there is a class of people in this world that will go into anything, however low and disgraceful it is, if there is a chance to make some money out of it.

There may have been, during the time that liquor selling to white men was legal, a saloon keeper in Northern Minnesota that would not sell liquor to an Indian on the sly but I certainly have grave doubts about it.

The U. S. Deputy Marshals were supposed to catch the offenders against the law but they certainly had a job on their hands.

In one of their periodical raids, they got old Bug-ah-ghe-shig as a witness against white men who had sold "Bug" some liquor, and he took "Bug" to Duluth. "Bug" claimed that after getting through with him there, they turned him loose and let him walk back home, where he was said to have arrived in an almost famished condition.

Whether his story was true or do not I do not know, but I do know that they never succeeded in getting him to Duluth again, although mighty efforts were made to do so.

On one occasion, in 1897, I think it was, a U. S. Deputy Marshal hired the "Flora". Reddy Lessard's boat, to take him over to the east shore to catch old "Bug", which he succeeded in doing easily, but before he could get away with his quarry, "Bug's" friends rallied to his relief and that Deputy Marshal was glad to get away with a whole skin but minus his prisoner.

That seemed to kind of dampen the ardor of the Deputies for east side prisoners so they concluded to let the agency police capture old "Bug" on one of his visits to the Agency to trade.

Library of Congress

When he came and the police at the Agency nailed him alright, there were also a number of his friends there and they rallied to his assistance and succeeded in their efforts to again free him.

If I remember correctly, there were seventeen of his friends that took part in the affair and instead of one lone Indian they now wanted seventeen more, so the U. S. Government concluded that it would take a number of troops to do the job and consequently they finally sent General Bacon and

MAJOR WILKINSON Second in Command at the Battle of Sugar Point, was Wounded Early in the Fight, had the Wound Dressed, Resumed His Command and Fell Mortally Wounded Shortly Thereafter. He had Survived Nine Previous Battles With Indians.

90 a detachment of the regular army who had just returned from their campaign in Cuba.

There were in addition to the troops, United States Marshal J. J. O'Connor, United States Deputy Marshall Mike Sheehan, and the head Indian Agent Tinker, who were to accompany the troops in their expedition against the recalcitrant Indians.

About midnight, the night before the expedition was to start, I was awakened by some one rapping on my door. We were sleeping up-stairs so I arose and hoisted the window and saw two men standing on the side walk in front of my door.

I inquired as to what they wanted and they replied that they were reporters for the Minneapolis papers and they wanted me to take them across the lake to the place where the troops were going. I told them that it would be impossible for me to do so as I was engaged to bring Charlie Weyerhauser and party from Steamboat landing the next day as they had engaged me to do so.

The next morning, I went down to the dock just as it was getting light enough to see and saw the expedition start.

Library of Congress

I did not believe that they would succeed in getting a single Indian as I was well acquainted with the locality and knew that if the Indians wished to do so that they could easily elude the troops and Indian police until snow came anyhow, and I was never so surprised in my life as I was on my return to Walker with Weyerhauser and his party, to find that the Indians had stood their ground and ere still fighting the troops and bad also driven off the two steamers that had carried the expedition and had wounded several persons on them also.

Sugar Point, the scene of their operations, is composed of two points with a bay and marsh separating them. The place where the troops landed was on the south side of the most southerly point where Bug-ah-na-ghe-shig had a clearing of about two acres near the center of which stood his log cabin and just of it was his potato patch.

When the troops landed there were a number of Indians at the cabin and the Indians Police, who were also along, succeeded in arresting Muckwah and another Indian who were of the seventeen rescuers.

While they were getting those two, the soldiers noticed other Indians who kept leaving the cabin and going into the woods east of the clearing.

After securing those two the troops and police went over across the marsh to the other point where some Indians lived but they did not succeed in getting any more of the men they wanted but on their way they found the council house of the east side Indians and made free with it. The newspaper men who were along, amused themselves by beating the big war drum that they found there, little thinking what the end might be.

After returning to "Bug's" place, the troops were ordered to stack 91 arms and prepare their breakfast.

After returning from their campaign in Cuba, a number of new recruits had been taken into the regular army and there were a few of those along with this detachment and as they

Library of Congress

were engaged in stacking arms, one of those green recruits had, it seems, neglected to turn the safety on his rifle and in some way fired it off.

The troops had been given strict orders not to fire on any Indians unless they were first fired upon and the Indians had agreed among themselves not to shoot unless the troops commenced it, so the unfortunate shot fired accidentally started the whole deplorable business.

As soon as that shot rang out, a volley came from the thick woods on the east side of "Bug's" clearing and that volley fired at close range was responsible for nearly all the casualties.

When that volley roared out and the killed and wounded went down, the survivors broke for cover but were rallied by their officers and charged across the clearing to the edge of the woods, driving the Indians back for the time being. Then they dug shallow rifle pits in the potato patch and held those until the Indians retired.

When the troops disembarked, they had left their tents, blankets and rations on the boats which lay some distance off shore on account of the shallow water and the troops had gone ashore on the ninety ton Guthrie scow that had been pulled in to the landing and when the firing began and the Indians began to try to kill the crews of both steamers, they got out of the danger zone as soon as possible. The "Chief" not waiting to hoist her anchor, snaked it along the sandy bottom until she was out of range of the enemy's guns.

Major Wilkinson, second in command, was wounded in the leg early in the fight but after having it bandaged he resumed his duties and was afterward shot through the body, receiving a fatal wound.

What a lonesome time those poor soldier boys had, being hungry and without tents, blankets, and rations. And those two steamers, fleeing to Walker and leaving those poor fellows to their fate, for they did not know how many Indians were opposed to them.

Library of Congress

As the "Flora" and "Chief" with U.S. Marshal O'Connor and Indian Inspector Tinker, fled for Walker, they met the A. Guthrie launch, the "Jennie", with some more newspaper correspondents on board, who returned to Walker while the crew of the "Jennie" concluded that they, together with a preacher who had come along, would steam on down to the scene to see what they could see.

They soon found out, for on coming within range of the Indians' rifles, they received a fusillade of bullets, one of which struck the wheelsman, breaking his arm and causing him to take refuge behind the boiler, leaving the boat to steer itself, but the preacher was equal to the occasion and sprang to the wheel and steered the boat out of danger, and as he and the crew had seen all they wished to see, they headed for Walker where the other boats had already gone.

The night after the fight, the tug "Flora" with the tents, baggage and rations on board, went over to Sugar Point and steamed along some distance from shore and sounded their whistle but failed to receive any response, so they returned to Walker without making any attempt to land.

The next day they went over again and landed and after unloading the baggage and supplies, they brought back the big Guthrie scow on which were the wounded and the dead bodies of Major Wilkinson and the six privates who had fallen.

The last man killed was shot early the next morning after the battle by a fifteen year old son of Bug-ah-na-ghe-shig, who was prowling about his father's clearing. As the soldiers had no food they dug potatoes from "Bug's" potato patch and this man was too late in getting his so the young Indian took a shot at him in the uncertain light and missed him, whereupon the soldier took shelter in "Bug's" cabin where some of his companions were, to whom he remarked, "I am going to get those potatoes any way", and went out and resumed his work, when the boy took another try at him and killed him instantly.

Library of Congress

After that the Indians did not molest them any more and after a few days elapsed General Bacon notified U.S. Marshal O'Connor that he wished to return to Walker, so O'Connor made arrangements with us to bring him and his forces to Walker, an account of which I have recorded elsewhere.

The Indians always claimed that they had sustained no less in the fight but I never believed their story in that respect.

The next summer after the unpleasantness, I was working for the Walker and Akeley Lumber Company, who were engaged in picking up logs that had been scattered over the lake by a severe storm.

The man in charge of their lumbering operations around Leech Lake was, I have no doubt, a capable man for a river or small lake work, but he was sadly deficient on such bodies of water as he encountered when he struck old Leech.

Ottertail Point is one of the most exposed and dangerous places on the Lake to tie up a boom of logs and he made it the center of his operations.

The company had been operating very extensively in lumbering around the lake the previous winter and had a number of booms of logs tied up in the various bays of the lake which they intended to pull over to the outlet near Federal Dam and then drive them down Leech River to the Mississippi.

The "Head Push" in charge of the logs made Ottertail Point the base of his operations and towed in and tied up booms around that point until he had about 13,000,000 feet of logs accumulated there.

Why he did not take them to the outlet while he was about it I never could comprehend, probably as I was only a steamboat man and not a

Library of Congress

Frank Briggs, a walker barber went along as a spectator, but proved himself a hero, for when the steamers carrying the tents, rations and baggage of the troops were driven off by the fierce of the Indians Briggs took a row boat, threw in a lot of food and rowed to the shore and returned while the Indians were firing at him. When he returned to the steamer the row boat was nearly full of water from the numerous bullet holes.

94 lumberman I was too dense to understand, but the consequence was that a tremendous storm came up and they soon had thirteen million feet of logs either piled up among the boulders on the shore or loose in the lake to be carried by the changing winds to nearly every part of its wide expanse.

As my boat was the only light draft, stern wheel boat on the lake at that time, I was engaged for about two months in combing the shores and rice beds collecting those logs into small booms and then they were taken by the tug to their destination.

One day while we were working on the log job the wind was adverse so we had to lie up until it either let up or changed in direction.

As we had nothing to do, "Sliver" whom I have mentioned in a former chapter, and I went over to the Sugar Point battle ground where he and his older brother and seventeen other Indians fought General Bacon, Major Wilkinson and about 80 U.S. troops th autumn previous.

He pointed out the spot to me where he lay on the ground, behind the fence on the east side of "Bug's" potato patch and took aim and fired through the fence at thee troops in the open field about twelve rods distant.

The Indians were completely hidden by the fence, brush and vines that grew along it and the thick maple timber was just behind them, so that all the troops had to aim at was the smoke from the guns of the Indians.

Library of Congress

"Sliver" had at least two close calls, as one of the Kragjorgenson bullets had cut off a small bush nearly at his right elbow and another had gone a few inches over him and entered a tree a few feet in his rear.

"Sliver's" older brother, so the Indians claim, was the man that shot and killed Major Wilkinson, who had been wounded once before during the fighting.

"Sliver" told me that during the battle a Boy River Indian who was wearing a white shirt at the time, said to his comrades, "They can't hit anything" and then he jumped up on the fence and stood there on the top of it while one of the soldiers fired three shots at him and then he jumped down again unhurt.

This reminded me of what a soldier told me when I was bringing Genehal Bacon and his troops off after the battle.

On our way to Walker, I talked considerable with the soldiers and they told me a great deal of their experience, and one of them said that he knew that he had killed one Indian when, during the fight, he saw an Indian who was wearing a white shirt and had climbed up in a tree and he fired three shots at him killing him at the third shot.

It was not hard to reconcile the slight discrepancies in the two accounts.

I asked "Sliver" as to how many Indians there were engaged in the fight and he answered "There was a hell of a lot of us, about twenty." "D—d hot place here that day, we pight like h—I." As the Chippewa vocabulary is limited to about eight hundred words (so I have been informed) so also their alphabet lacks the sound of F and R and, as many of those east shore and Bear Island Indians had not, at that time, mastered all those sounds, consequently "Sliver" pronounced fight as though the initial letter was pronounced P.

It was a sad and deplorable affair and would have never happened if all of those United States Deputy Marshals had been honest men but those grafters among them who wanted

Library of Congress

a chance to cheat the United States Government, for if they had wished they could have gotten witnesses in Walker to testify in their prosecutions of liquor dealers who sold liquor to the Indians, but instead, they wanted to get witnesses from the east side as then they would have to hire a steamboat and when they paid the boatman they would have him sign a receipt in blank and then they could fill in any amount that they saw fit and put it in their expense account and collect it from the United States Government.

The first and only United States Gov't. Deputy Marshal that I ever carried on one of those trips, when he paid me, presented a blank receipt for me to sign and when I asked him to fill in the amount that he paid me, he seemed insulted and that was the first, last and only time that I ever done any of that kind of work as they did not wish to do business with anybody who was so particular.

BUG-AH-NAH-GHE-SHIG (Hole-in-the-day) He was not a bad Indian, but Unfortunate.

CHAPTER XIX When I Brought General Bacon and His Troops off After the Battle of Sugar Point

A few days after the fight between the detachment of the U.S. troops under General Bacon and the hostile Chippewas, in which Major Wilkinson and six soldiers were killed and seven soldiers and several civilians were wounded, United States Marshall J. J. O'Connor sent a messenger to me stating that he wanted to see me at the Hotel Pameda, where he was staying at the time. I went over to see what he wanted and he stated that he intended to send boats over as Gen. Bacon wished to return with his men to Walker.

O'Connor said that he wanted my boat, the Leila D, and the tug. Chief of Duluth to take the big Guthrie scow and start at 2 a. m. the next morning. I told him that I did not need the Chief or the scow as I could easily bring the troops and their baggage on my boat alone, but he replied that he knew better than that and would sent the two boats and scow also, so we prepared to go.

Library of Congress

Word had come to Walker that Indians had threatened to fire on any boat passing through the Narrows to Gen. Bacon's relief, so I told Marshal O'Connor that I wanted him to furnish me with enough baled hay to form a row of bales standing on end just inside the guard railing from near the bow to the stern on each side to protect us from the fire as at the time of the battle the Indians had tried utmost to kill the crew of the boats that had landed the troops and Indian police.

I also took the precaution to move my steering wheel from the pilot house down to the deck just in front of the boiler and engine.

We started about two a. m., my son Arthur, at the wheel, for I acted as engineer. We placed the Chief on the starboard side of the scow and Leila D on the port. When we reached the shallows of the Narrows we cast the chief loose as she would have all she could do with her six or seven foot draught to get through without any load and we, with the scow proceeded on ahead through the Narrow and then waited until the Chief came up.

As we were passing through the Narrows, and as we came abreast of Squaw Point where the channel runs in near shore, where there stood an old log house, the guard of a corporal and three soldiers whom Marshal O'Connor had sent along were all in readiness to reply to any shot that might be sent at us and I also had my forty-five ninety right at hand to help do my share, but I am glad to say there was no demonstration and everything was quiet as a grave as we passed.

When the Chief came up and took her place we steered for Ottertail Point to avoid the reef that lies near the center of the lake on a direct 98 line between the Narrows and Sugar Point, as we were running a straight course I told my son that it would not be necessary for him to stay at the wheel as the steersman on the Chief cold hold the course.

Library of Congress

When we reached Ottertail Point I went over to the Chief and gave the pilot instructions where to steer for, as he did not know that part of the lake very well. The weather was clear and bright with a slight breeze from the northwest. Off to the east were two bright stars about twenty degrees apart.

The most northerly one of the two stood directly over Sugar Point which could be just made out by a person who had good eyesight. I told him to steer direct for that star. Then I went back to my own station as engineer.

After a little while I looked out and saw that he was not running where I had told him to go as he was running to the southerly star.

When I told him, he replied that he was following the same course that I had given him and I replied by telling him to look back and see where his stern pointed, for in place of pointing to the tip of Ottertail, it was pointing way north of it some twenty degrees. He then acknowledged that he had switched stars.

I did not suppose that he had been going wrong for so long as to get us near the reef, but as we were bowling along suddenly there was a tremendous shock and we stopped dead still. I instantly shut off steam and ran over to the Chief which now stood up out of the water almost as if she were in dry dock.

I asked the engineer as to the state of her bottom, whether she was leaking much or not and he replied that she did not appear to be damaged much.

That part of the reef on which she had struck was composed of small boulders and cobblestone and she had plowed her way for several rods into them, making a deep grove in which she rested. I hitched on and tried to pull her off with the help of her engine going astern but could not budge her.

Library of Congress

I then put the big scow ahead of my boat and taking up a position directly in her front, tried to butt her off. I dared not strike her very hard for fear of smashing in her bow or that of the scow, but would run up slowly and then just before we would strike her I would turn on the full steam ahead and at the same time the engines of the Chief would try to back her for all she was worth, thus gaining at each blow about eighteen inches and in time we would have gotten her off, but the officer in charge of the guard, becoming impatient at the delay, came to me and asked if I could bring all the troops and their baggage with my boat alone and I told him that I certainly could, so he told me to cast loose and leave the scow and the tug, which we did, proceeding with the Leila D only and arriving at Sugar Point as day was breaking and then we went ashore and reported to General Bacon who then gave orders for the transfer of the baggage and troops to the boat.

The water at the landing was very shallow for some distance out and

Pow-wow at the "Old Agency"

100 I told General Bacon my plan for the loading. That we would load the baggage right on the boat where she lay at the landing and then I would back out a little and we would bring off the soldiers in small boats to where the water was deeper.

He approved of my plan and told me to go ahead with it which we did. As soon as some of the soldiers were aboard they, under the direction of their officers, took position along the guard and prepared to answer any shots that might come from the thick woods to the east of us but there was no interference and we soon had them all on board and returned to where we had left the Chief and the scow. On our arrival we found that they had succeeded in getting her off by butting her with the scow. So we then proceeded on our way to Walker.

Those soldiers were a pleased and happy lot of fellows to get away from there as they said that nothing that they had experienced in Cuba, from which they had just returned, was as tough as that affair with those Indians for when the firing commenced they were stacking

Library of Congress

arms preparatory to getting breakfast and their rations and tents were still on the boats and the boats had to get out or be shot to pieces and their crews killed. So they lost no time in the order of their going but went at once, one of them not waiting to pull up his anchor but snaked it along the bottom until out of range of the Indians' rifles.

So the soldiers had nothing to eat until night came when they dug some of Bug-ah-na-ghe-shig's potatoes and managed to keep from starving until help came. The last man killed was digging some potatoes as it was getting light the next morning. He was fired at by Bug's fifteen year old son who was prowling around his father's home in the uncertain light, but his first shot missed and the soldier ran back into the house, but he said, "I am going to get those potatoes anyway", and went back. The boy's next shot finished him.

The Indians claim that none of them were hit by the bullets of the soldiers but I always doubted the claim. The next spring after the fight I was employed by the Walker-Akeley Lumber Company in helping to pick up thirteen million feet of pine logs that a severe storm had scattered over nearly the whole lake and it took us nearly two months to complete the job and during that time I visited nearly the whole of the lake shore and while doing so I noticed several newly made graves and each was covered with a tiny painted red.

Always before those tiny grave houses were painted white, that is, if they were painted at all. So I made up my mind that there was some reason for the change in color.

Before we arrived in Walker, General Bacon asked me what remuneration I was to receive for the trip. I told him that I had asked Marshal O'Connor twenty dollars for the trip but he said that I would get fifteen dollars. General Bacon reflected for a moment and said, "You put in your bill for twenty-five dollars and it will be paid", and it was.

CHAPTER XX Some Indians I Have Known

During my thirteen years experience in running a steamboat on Leech Lake I became acquainted with almost all of the sixteen hundred Indians that live on the Leech Lake

Library of Congress

Reservation and I can truthfully say that there are many fine men among them, especially those who lived on the north and east shores of the lake and also those on Bear Island and the Boy River Indians, one of whom, Moosehunter, or Redhair, was a fine old man whose life history I would have liked very much to have had. In his over eighty years of life, during which he had many encounters with his enemies, the Sioux, he took six scalps which he preserved up to the time of his death and which were, so I have learned, buried with him.

Some of the Indians told of his fearlessness and how, on one occasion, during one of their war dances, as they were "Striking the Post" and recounting their deeds of valor, an Indian named May-dway-we-nind, of the Leech Lake Band, who some years previously, had shot and killed Hole-in-the-day the Younger, who at that time was head chief of all the Chippewas, arose and after striking the post, began to boast of what he had done, and among the valorous deeds that he had done, he told of killing Hole-in-the-day.

That was more than Redhair could stand and springing to his feet, the old warrior pulled his knife from its sheath and walking across the ring to the boasting warrior, he in no uncertain terms proceeded to tell May-dway-we-nind what he thought of the man who, for a private grudge, would not only kill a member of his tribe, but the chief of that tribe, in such a cowardly manner as he, May-dway-we-nind, had done by lying in ambush and shooting Hole-in-the-day as he was driving along in his carriage.

I was well acquainted with both Redhair and May-dway-we-nind and know that physically Redhair was no match for his opponent as May-dway-we-nind was a powerfully built man while Redhair was light and slender, besides being old, but the sight of the grim old warrior, victor in many a fight with the Sioux, standing there with knife in hand all ready for business was too much for the assassin and he dare not resent it.

May-dway-we-nind afterward lost his life by breaking through the ice on Leech lake. He succeeded in reaching shore, but perished there with cold.

Library of Congress

Another Boy River Indian that I thought a great deal of was Mu-quah (the Bear) who was one of the seventeen Indians that the troops were after

RED HAIR A fine old gentleman, a close friend of mine.

103 when the battle of Sugar Point occurred.

An incident that showed the evils of Indians given strong drink happened while I was boating on Leech Lake, about 1905, I think.

A lot of Indians from Sugar Point and Bear Island, after receiving their annuity payment, came to Walker and proceeded to stock up with supplies for the winter. When they had finished their trading they came to me and engaged me to take them, their supplies and their thirteen birch canoes on my boat to Sugar Point.

When we were all loaded and ready to start I went up to my house a short distance from the dock and told my wife where I was going and who I was taking and remarked to her that the Indians were so different from those around the Agency as in all the party of twenty-five or thirty there was not one that had been drinking, but from what afterwards transpired it seems that my praise was a little premature.

Before we had gone one-half mile from Walker the whiskey flasks began to appear and the men began to drink. My son Arthur was at the wheel while I was engineer and fireman. Shortly after we got under way an old Indian came into the engine room and sat down on a pile of wood and watched me as I performed my various duties and while engaged in that, he also enjoyed himself shaving his sparse beard.

Perhaps some reader of these lines has never seen an old Indian play barber on himself. For such a one's benefit, I will here describe the process.

The would-be self-barber takes his hunting knife in one hand and lays the blade on the portion of his face that he intends to reap, then with the fore finger or thumb of the other

Library of Congress

hand, he doubles the incipient hairs over the edge of the blade and does not cut them off, but pulls them out root and all.

After having attained the desired effect, this Indian replaced his knife in the sheath and went off to some other part of the boat, but in a short time he returned and began searching among the wood on which he had been sitting a short time before. I asked him what he had lost and he replied by showing me his knife sheath, which was empty.

I instantly devined the reason of its emptiness as I was aware of the habit that the Indian women have of abstracting their husbands' knives whenever the husbands got any whiskey or alcohol, but I did not let on, but assisted him in his search for the knife, but it is needless to say that we did not find it.

The drinking went merrily on and before we had ran the twenty miles to Sugar Point, some of them were getting to feeling pretty good. Two of them went up into the Pilot house and one of them tried to get Arthur to alter his course, but Art held his course and paid no attention to him. Then they went down on the forward deck and soon began to fight, but the other Indians separated them and made them behave until we reached the landing at Sugar Point. 104 certainly have been a different story to tell.

Before arriving there some of the Bear Islanders came to me and offered me a dollar if, after landing the others, I would carry them down to Bear Island, a mile distant, as they had a sewing machine and cook stove which they could not handle readily in their birch canoes. So I agreed to do so, as soon as we had unloaded the Sugar Point outfit.

As soon as the boat reached shore our two combatants went up on the greensward and resumed their fistic argument that they had been compelled to adjourn a short time previously. Others left their work of unloading and went up to separate them, but as soon as two of the peace makers pulled the combatants apart they, the combatants, turned on the interrupters and proceeded to thump them, and as others interfered, only a few

Library of Congress

minutes had elapsed before there were six separate fights going on with twelve drunken Indians as participants.

After it had been going on for a few minutes an Indian seized an axe and started to climb the bank but before he had gotten half way up, two or three of the women seized him and speedily disarmed him.

One of the men engaged in the scrap I was well acquainted with, he having been employed by the Walker-Akeley Lumber Co., for whom I also was working with my steamboat, being engaged in picking up and booming about thirteen million feet of pine logs that had been broken up and scattered over the lake by a storm and which it took two steamboats and a crew of about twenty men two months to pick up and re-boom.

This Indian, whose Chippewa name I have forgotten, but whose English name was John Paper, was a tall, slim fellow, who weighed about one hundred and thirty five pounds, so we nick-named him "Silver". His wife was built on an entirely different plan and weighed about two hundred pounds or more and it seems that she did not approve of the way her lord and master was behaving himself so she took a hand in trying to make him behave.

She would seize him around the waist with both arms and pulling back and yanking him sidewise would fall down with him underneath and try to hold him, but he was a wirey chap and he was a born wriggler and within a few seconds would escape from her embrace and would rush for his man again, who would be standing waiting for him and then they would go at it again hot as ever and "Slivers" wife would make another long shot and the same thing with perhaps a few variations would be repeated. This happened time after time until other women and men interfered and finally succeeded in getting the melee quelled.

I had been sitting on the upper deck watching the performance and after it had closed I went over and looked over the actors to see what damage had been done and aside from some torn clothing the only visible injuries that I could discover was that one of the

men engaged had a very little blood seeping from his nose, but if those women had not exercised their good sense and sneaked away their husband's knives there would

105

"Sliver's" wife finally succeeded in getting him on board and I never saw a madder Indian than he was as he was frothing at the mouth and was as pale as if he was dead, but by the time we reached his home at the north end of Bear Island he was pretty well over his anger. There is one thing that I can give him credit for and that is when his wife was endeavoring to stop him from fighting he did not act rough with her, but just tried to get loose as quick as possible without hurting her in any way.

I am sorry to say that I think some white men that I have known would not have been so exceedingly careful under the same circumstances and I have my doubts whether all Indians would have been either.

MAH-GE-GAH-BOW One of my old Leach Lake Friends.

CHAPTER XXI My War with The Red River Lumber Company

When i first commenced to operate my boat the "Leila D" on Leech Lake in the year 1895, there were no lumbering operations being carried on, on or around the lake, and except for a small amount of timber cut by the U. S. Government to build the original dam at the point now known as Federal Dam, the original forest surrounding the lake stood in all its primeval glory.

The first company to begin operations was the Brained Lumber Company, of which a Mr. Cooke was a representative.

While they were doing business on the lake I did a great deal of work for them in the line of towing booms of logs and hauling supplies for them.

Library of Congress

They seemed to be a fine company of men and in our business relations we never had the least misunderstanding or trouble in any way or manner.

If they found it necessary to put a boom across a stream they would leave a man in charge to open it if a boat needed to pass through.

They were glad to have us work for them and we were glad to have the work to do. Other lumbermen who came later were the same and everything went on to everybody's satisfaction for a number of years. But this era of good feeling came to an end when a few years later the Red River Lumber Company, the T. B. Walker tribe their boat the "Chief of Duluth" and launched it on the lake and commenced their lumbering operations.

Their holdings of timber around the lake and on its tributaries were vast and in consequence they seemed to think they owned the universes and could make everyone else do just as they themselves wished and in consequence the other boats operating on the lake and the Red River fellows soon came into collision.

A year or two previous to their arrival a large piece of bog some four or five acres in extent broke loose from its mooring at the head of Steamboat bay and drifted down and lodged in the thoroughfare where Kabekona bay joins Leech Lake and under the pressure of a strong-northeast wind it pushed up in folds across the channel effectually shutting it off for anything except for row boats or flat bottom boats such as my steamer was.

I could run over it all right and so it remained for several years.

The old river channel which had been made when what is now Leech Lake was some seven or more smaller lakes was except where it was tilted 107 up at the ends about nine feet deep and into that channel that bog was driven and folded up into seventeen folds at right angles to the course of the stream.

Library of Congress

When the Red River Company began operations they undertook to clear that channel and to do so they had an immense steel knife about seven feet long and several inches wide made which they bolted to the stern of the tug with which they expected to run into and cut that bog to pieces.

Anyone who had ever had anything to do with bog should have known, if they had common sense, that such a contraption would not work, as bog, like lots of other similar things, in order to divide them, must have a drawing cut.

Well, they went up there and worked for several days and at the end of that time you could not see that they had accomplished anything so they quit and gave it up as a bad job.

About a year later I got a contract with the Martin Bros. of Duluth to bring over a lot of railroad ties that had in Boy river a short distance below the outlet of Boy Lake.

These ties were to be delivered at what was known as Logans Hoist, on Kabekona bay on the M. & I. roalroad. In order to reach that point it was necessary to pass through the Kabekona thoroughfare and consequently that bog had to come out and I went at it accordingly. Before this I had tried handling bog with hooks and knew they would tear out if much strain was put upon them. So I had some rake teeth made on one inch Norway iron, each about thirty inches long which I put in a rake head of heavy timber about twelve feet long with a handle of like dimensions. The two outer teeth had an in the upper end of each in which a rope bridle was placed. In the center of the bridle a line was hitched with ran over a pulley in the outer end of a spar that was fastened to the deck of the boat and projected out like the bowsprit of a sailing vessel. The end of the rake handle was fastened loosely to an eyebolt in the stem of the boat.

The line from the rakehead after passing over the pulley led to the cupstan on the foreward deck so that the rake could raised or lowered at will.

Library of Congress

But in order to move that bog it was necessary to divide it into sections so I took a common pike pole and attached a large cross cut saw to the end of it and on this pole I put two scythe nibs for handles.

With these tools we went at it and in about five days we had the channel cleared.

We would saw off a section about a rod wide and forty or fifty feet long and when it was cut loose we would run up and drop the rake teeth into it and then going astern very slowly would gradually loosen and unfold it and then tow it out into deep water where we would hoist our rake and let it go to sink or swim as it chose.

The ties that I was to move had been made and put in the river two or three years before in cribs twenty-four feet square and about five feet deep 108 and as they rested in a rice bed in three or four feet of water they were pretty well water soaked and about one-half or more of them would sink when pulled out of the crib.

I had taken the job in the fall and during the ensuing winter my son Arthur and I had gotten out and placed on the river bank adjacent to the ties a lot of long dry cedars and tamarack logs to make side pieces for the rafts, also a lot of tamarack poles about five inches in diameter and twenty-four feet long for cross pieces.

These cross pieces were spiked to the side pieces every eight feet six inches, and under each pole was placed a row of ties placed longitudinally.

The first layer was made of dry ties from the tops of the cribs. Then another layer was laid longitudinally between the cross pieces. Then three tiers of ties were placed in a layer between the poles at right angles to the first two. Along the outer ends of this layer was run a telephone wire that was stapled to the top of the cross pieces and to the ends of some of the ties. Another layer was then put on longitudinally, on top of which was placed some long timbers twenty-six feet long which each composed three ties and through which the ends of which had been bored three inch auger holes in which were standards to hold the

Library of Congress

original cribs together, and in these holes we put large wooden pins which went down on each side of the raft and held it together.

We made those rafts about two hundred feet long and when finished we would put them ahead of the steamboat and shove them instead of towing them behind and subjecting them to the backwash of the steamboat.

We brought over six of these rafts if I remember correctly, and only lost one tie.

But it was a job to take those rafts to pieces when we were loading the ties on the cars at the hoist so when, a year or two later I took another contract from the same firm to bring over 18000 ties I concluded to use a fifty ton barge that I had constructed to haul the rock to make the concrete (of which the new Federal Dam is built.)

This last lot of ties were piled in ranks along the shore of Boy river at what was known as the Big S. about one and half miles below Boy lake.

I took my tie hoist over there and mounted it on a raft of dry cedar logs which I would place at the bow of the steamer and run the hoist from a pair of small twin engines mounted on the starboard side of the forward deck.

With that rig I could load a barge of ties in a short time.

After beginning operations I had brought over a number of barge loads and had built a long rick of ties in the shallow water near the railroad track alongside and parallel with it where they could be easily loaded into cars.

The ends of the rick were cribbed up so that the waves would not wash them down and scatter them.

Everything was going on unerringly and we were getting along fine when one day on our return trip when nearing the mouth of Boy river we 109 found the river near its mouth,

Library of Congress

packed full of logs for one half mile with a boom across the mouth of the river and a lumber jack in charge with orders, so he said, not to open the boom on any account.

Well, we tried for two days to work down through those logs but could not do it.

On open water or upstream in a river I could drive a barge of ties easily if there was enough water so the logs as we passed over them did not lie on the bottom, but going downstream they would pile up into a solid mass under the bow of the barge and stop us completely.

After working for two day as we were running short of provision I took a sharp axe in my rowboat and went down and had another interview with that lumber jack.

I stated the situation and told him that I would have to get out, but he replied his orders were to not open that boom and let any of those logs out under any consideration.

He had a lot of boom stuff jackknifed up and lying there all ready to use it he would do so. I finally said to him, "Now see here, there is just one of two things going to happen, either you are going to let out some of that boom stuff so that I can get out, or I will myself and if I do the job there will in all probability a great deal more be let out than if you do it," for I intended, if he refused that I would take my axe and run down to the end of that boom stick and at one blow cut that line that held that boom in place.

When I had delivered my ultimatum he stood and looked me in the eye for as much as a half minute without saying a word.

What he saw where he was looking I do not know but at the end of his stare he opened his mouth and inquired, "Do you think you could get out if I let out ten lengths of boomstuff?"

I replied that I thought I could.

He then said, "When you're ready, signal me and I will let it down."

Library of Congress

I returned to the steamer, raised steam, blew the whistle to let him know that I was ready and he then released ten lengths and we ran out without any trouble there, but when we arrived at Kabekona thoroughfare we found that our troubles had just commenced for across the channel that we had so laboriously cleared a year or so before, was stretched two booms, one of either end of the channel and between them was packed a solid mass of logs belonging to the Red River Lumber Company, who had some two years previously tried clearing that same channel and had given it up as a bad job.

In charge of the outfit was a lumber jack by the name of Prebble and a gang of lumber jacks left there by the T. B. Walker outfit to see that no one interfered with it.

And they had, in my absence, torn down the crib of ties that I had built at one end of Martin Bros. tie rank and taken about thirty of their ties with which they had constructed a loading platform to use in the loading of their logs on the railroad cars.

When I arrived I asked Prebble how long they intended to occupy the 110 channel and he would give me no satisfactory answer and I had a jawing match over the stealing of the ties that they had taken.

He did not make any threats to my face, but a man told me that after I was gone back to my boat, Prebble said that if that steamboat captain did not quit bothering him that he, Prebble, would knock hell out of him.

We lay there working for four days during which time I went to the telephone office and had a talk with Fletch Walker, one of old T.B.'c whelps but could get no satisfaction from him, but, however, in that conversation I told him of the threat his foreman had made, and I added that just as sure as that foreman made a move to assault me, just so sure I would shoot him.

Library of Congress

During those four days waiting they would have a lumber jack sit on the headworks that were attached to the boom and watch all night to see that we did not interfere with it.

One night while he was there it was quite cool and I felt sorry for the poor fellow and I went out on the forward deck and asked him to come on board and sit in the pilot house of the boat where he could see about everything and at the same time be comfortable, but he declined and said he had been ordered to stay on the headworks and he would do so.

On the morning of the fifth day we raised steam and prepared for action.

The lower boom was attached at the south end to a large piling driven in the edge of the channel. The north end with a set of headworks was fastened with a heavy line to a big anchor which was planted in the meadow some six or eight rods from the channel.

I made up my mind to attack the north end as I knew from experience that I could easily pull that anchor, but I was not so sure of pulling that piling.

Before starting out to pull the thing I took my barge of ties out in the lake out of the way and anchored it and I also took a large box and placed it on the forward deck and on that within easy reach from where I would stand I placed my 45.90 Winchester which was loaded and full of cartridges. I then blew four long blasts on the whistle to inform them that I wanted them to open that boom.

Those four blasts brought Prebble and his gang from their quarters, but they made no move to do so, but ranged themselves on the Great Northern railroad bridge at the head of the thoroughfare to see what I would do.

I do not think that they had any idea that I could raise that anchor that they had so firmly planted.

Library of Congress

Well, they soon found out for when I was all ready I ran in and threw a heavy iron hook that I used in towing, which was attached to a heavy line, over a boom chain near the north bank, turned and gave the order, "full speed astern."

I let the boat get well under way before I snubbed the line over the 111 bitts on the forward deck, and that line sung like a fiddle string and that anchor jumped in the air and came bumping and sliding across the meadow.

That sight awoke Prebble and his gang from their apathy and galvanized them into action and they sprung down off that bridge and came charging down across those floating logs, pike poles in hand ready for business.

But when they drew near and saw that 45.90 lying quietly across that box their ardor seemed to dampen and their desire to form a boarding party to abate and they contented themselves with standing on the logs and with their poles planted in the bottom they held them from drifting downstream.

By this time I had the boom and headworks clear of the channel and then I addressed Prebble and told him that if he would leave them there until I had passed that it would be all right, but if he made a move to replace them before I had passed with my barge of ties, that I would hitch on again and pull the whole thing out into the lake.

He answered sullenly that he did not care a d--n what I did with them.

I then unhooked and ran down and coupled onto the barge which I put ahead of the steamer and went through, the barge riding right over the logs and as they arose at the stern, the steamers wheel with its arms and paddles of tough oak, would kick them out behind.

Just as we were passing through, the section crew of the Great Northern railroad, having heard my whistle came in sight, and I whistled for them to open the draw bridge which they

Library of Congress

immediately proceeded to do and as we passed the draw bridge I requested the section foreman to hold it open for a few minutes and I would return immediately with the steamer, leaving the barge of ties, thus relieving him of reopening the draw the second time, as we could bring the empty barge back through under the bridge, so he did as I requested.

One night during the four days that we were lying there waiting, the wind blew very hard from the northwest, and the next morning Prebble came over to the boat and said to me. "There are about three hundred of your ties afloat and loose in the bay and I thought that I would tell you so that you could recover them."

I answered him, "Mr. Pebble, my contract with Martin Bros. of Duluth requires me to bring those ties from Boy River and pile them at this siding and I have done so consequently I have nothing more to do with them, but I shall notify Martin Bros of your tearing down the crib at the end of the pile and thus allowed the waves to scatter them, and I will also inform them of the number that you took to build your loading platform so that they can make settlement with the Red River Company."

This information seemed to set him to thinking for he went back and set his gang of lumberjacks to collecting the loose ties and piling them up securely.

Afterward when I was settling up with the Duluth firm, they made mention of some ties that they said that I had sold to the Red River Lumber 112 Company.

I immediately wrote them and told them that any man that said that I ever sold a tie of theirs to that company or to anyone else, was an infernal liar and if they would give me his name, I would tell him so, to his face the first time that I met him, but they did not give me his name.

Of course it was the T.B. Walker outfit who accused me of selling them to them.

Library of Congress

As I was having so much trouble with them I threatened to appeal to the U.S. District Attorney at St. Paul.

Fletch Walker in reply told me that should I do so that in all probability my boat would be tied up for good while theirs would be allowed to run, as their boat had been inspected by a United States inspector while mine had not.

That threat made me mad and as the fellow said, "I dipped my pen in vitriol and went after them."

I have an idea that the Walkers doing business as they have received some very insulting literature, but I have my doubts of their ever getting any missive that gave them such an insight into their true character as that communication of mine did.

I have wished many time since that I had kept a copy of it, but at the present time I can recall only a few lines in regard to the government tying me up.

I told him that I would much prefer being tied up by the U.S. government than to be held up at every turn and corner by a slum-bred lumber jack in the employ of a thieving lumber company; when I say thieving I speak advisedly as a residence of over fifty years in northern Minnesota and a knowledge of the methods whereby unscrupulous lumbermen robbed the U.S. government domain of its timber, enables me to know what I am talking about.

I then wrote to United States Attorney, Charles C. Haupt of St. Paul and he immediately answered and he told me to send in a complaint to the Secretary of War at Washington, which I did and in a few days I received an answer enclosing two copies of that portion of the United States navigation law pertaining to inland waters, one copy of which I sent to the Red River Lumber Company with the request that after perusing it they would return it to me, but I suppose it is needless to say that I never saw it again.

Library of Congress

About that time United States Attorney Haupt sent an agent up to investigate, but when he arrived they had gotten the logs out of the thoroughfare, but had a large boom of logs across the head of it, completely closing the channel just above the Great Northern railway bridge.

The agent looked things over and said the Red River Lumber Company by putting that boom of logs there had thereby laid themselves liable to a fine of \$500.00 for each offense.

Shortly after that they cleared out everything leaving the channels free.

I then made out and sent them an itemized bill charging them for what time I had spent getting through their booms and logs and one item was 113 \$10.00 for snaking out their boom at the lower end of the Kabekona thoroughfare.

When I sent in the bill I told them that I had no desire in the future to hamper them in their logging operations, neither did I intend to allow them to hamper me in operating my steamer and if they would settle my bill, which they justly owed me that we could easily get along with no more trouble, but if they did not settle, I would certainly make it as interesting for them as I could.

I received no answer until about a month had elapsed then they made me an offer to settle for \$75.00 (my bill was for \$115.00).

I paid no attention to their communication and about two weeks later they wrote again offering me \$90.00 to settle to which I made no answer and finally after another month or so along came their checks for the full amount and so ended our war as we did not have any more trouble as the T.B. Walker tribe evidently discovered that when it came to a show down between them and the government of the United States they, even if they did

have a million or more of ill-gotten wealth, were only private citizens and had to obey the law the same as other people.

CHAPTER XXII Where Was The Northwest Fur Company's Stockade Located on Leech Lake

"I read with interest of the different things mentioned as happening in the vicinity of the Old Agency in times past and I agree with a part of them, but in regard to some others I am like the man from Missouri.

In regard to the first farming in the territory of Minnesota being done at or near the Old Agency I agree with and am sorry that I did not know of such being the case until after I left Walker, for if I had known of it when I first came to Leech lake in the early spring of 1895, about a year before Walker was founded, I would have tried to learn from some of the old Indians where the field in which farming was first done in Minnesota, was located.

"In regard to the English having barracks at Onigum, there is certainly some mistake for I was over that ground in the spring of 1895 and there was certainly no sign of any habitation having ever been erected there it all being virgin forest at that time and was of several years thereafter until the Agent, I think it was Major Scott, put up buildings and removed the Indian Agency to what is now Onigum.

"The word 'Onigum' as you are well aware means a portage or carrying place and was applied to many different places as there was an Onigum near Walker from what was known as the shipyard where I built the Leila D. in the spring of 1895. A heavy trail ran over to Lake May. Near this trail Peter Wold, while herding the town cattle found an old flintlock shotgun with a sawed-off barrel very likely one of those they cut off to enable them to be under their women's blankets when they and the Ottawas were pretending to play a game of baggataway and surprised and captured the British fort at Michlimacananac in June 1763.

Library of Congress

"There was another Onigum from old Agency over north to the big lake where there were the remains of a dock and the remains of some old buildings in 1895. I inquired of the Indians in regard to those remains and they told me that there was where they first settled at Leech lake after they had driven out the Sioux. According to W. W. Warren, author of 'History of the Ojibways' the Northwestern Fur Co. had a stockaded trading post at Leech lake at the time of Lieutenant Pike's visit but he makes no mention of any trouble between the company officers and Pike when he arrived with a few men on the 16th of February 1806.

115

"Pike, in obedience to the orders of his superiors had come up the Mississippi and had landed at the mouth of the St. Peters Sept. 21, 1805, where he held a council with the chiefs of several bands of the Sioux, Sept. 23, and prevailed on them to recall a large force of their warriors who had just marched against the Chippewas. He then resumed his journey up river using batteaus but was compelled to stop on account of ice and was frozen in at the foot of the rapids now known by his name. After building quarters for his men and killing a lot of game to supply them with food he with a party of his men resumed his march overland to Leech lake where he arrived Feb. 16, 1806, held a council with some Chippewa chiefs, made arrangements that two of their number should return with him to St. Louis. While he was there he visited Cass Lake but Warren makes no mention of his constructing any blockhouse at Leech Lake.

"The above information is recorded in Vol. 5 of the Minnesota Historical Society's collection, pages 349 to 459. From what I have read of Warren he appears to have been a man whose word could be depended upon at all times.

The Northwest Fur Co. trading post at Leech Lake where Lieutenant Pike took over and established the authority of the United States February 16th, 1806, stood I think on the south shore of Leech lake at a place known in an early day as the 'old North Agency' where in the autumn of 1895 I noticed a lot of old ruins, the nature of which I did not learn

Library of Congress

at that time, but since have been told that those ruins were the remains of the Northwest Fur Co.s post and was also where the Rev. J. A. Gilfillan established a Mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church in an early day.

Opposite those ruins, in the lake about fifty feet from shore, was the remains of what was a dock.

What was left in 1895 was a wall built of large boulders. The wall was about twenty-five feet long and four wide and projected above the water about a foot and was parallel to the shore. Strong timbers were laid from the shore to the wall to form supports for a covering.

Well, enough of this but I will add a little that may interest you.

“During the thirteen years that I plowed the waters of old Leech Lake in the Leila D. I was always trying to read its history as it was recorded in the sands of its bottom and its shores and I long ago came to the conclusion that it and three other lakes, namely Steamboat, Boy and Swift were in a class by themselves, different from any other of the many that I have become acquainted with in the 73 years and over that I have lived in the Territory and State of Minnesota. While some lakes have committed suicide by cutting down their outlets to such an extent that they were drained dry leaving only their seawalls to mark their ancient shores, the greater number have remained practically the same in size during the 7,000 or more years that have elapsed since the last glacier that descended from the Laurentian range and swept over this part of the State.

“But in regard to Leech and the others named my observations during the thirteen years convinced me that instead of becoming smaller they have 116 increased greatly in size and considerably in depth. The conclusions that I came to were these:

1st. That during the greater part of the period of time that had elapsed since the glacial age the basin which Leech now occupies, contained at least six or perhaps seven different lakes, the largest of which was situated where the large part of Leech is now but was

Library of Congress

not so large in surface and was much smaller in volume of water for the reason that the surface level of these six or seven lakes was I think at least eight and possibly ten feet below the present level of the water in Leech lake. Bear Island, at that time was a part of the cast shore and the whole northern part of the west arm comprising more than one-half of its present surface with the exception of a small pond near Leech Lake Siding and another, a little larger, east of Minnesota Island. That part of the lake known as the 'narrows' was dry land with three streams flowing through it, whose ancient serpentine channels were plainly visible when I came and first saw them in 1895.

"There was also the remains of an oak forest in the white sand of the lake bottom, the stumps of which still stood until the spring of 1897 when the ice in going out piled them up on the shore. There were people living on old Leech's shores at that time as is witnessed by the fact that they burned their dead in mounds that have since been covered by the water of the lake.

"I am of the opinion also that at one time the Mississippi river flowed thru Leech lake, coming down that ancient river bed that leaves the Mississippi at or near Lake Irving and flows southeast into Steamboat lake on the north side about half way up the lake.

CHAPTER XXIII Some Interesting Things I Have Seen

By far the most wonderful beautiful, and interesting scene that I ever beheld I witnessed in the autumn of 1906 if I remember correctly. I was out hunting and was lying in my sleeping bag beside a deer trail in the woods about three miles west of Walker, Minnesota.

The moon being at first quarter gave enough light only for a short time in the evening, so when it went low I composed myself to sleep with my face openly exposed to the sky as I usually did when the weather was not too cold.

Before I went to sleep I had noted a dense, dark bank of Aurora clouds forming in the north extending up some forty-five degrees that I knew presaged an unusual display later

Library of Congress

in the night, but never expected to see anything such as I did when I awoke about 2 a. m. the next morning.

In my many years residence in northern Minnesota with my mania for hunting and outdoor life I had seen many beautiful exhibitions of the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights as that phenomenon is popularly called, a very few of which had taken on that form known as the curtain form in a slight degree.

When I accidentally opened my eyes at 2 a. m. they beheld the most entrancing scene that I ever saw and I never expect to see another as beautiful as that, not in this world at least.

From a point directly overhead and extending to the horizon in every direction like the spokes of an immense wheel, were what resembled immense curtains, gorgeous in their coloring but predominantly in shades of pink from a deep rose to lighter shades.

Those curtains were not straight but seemed to be entirely too long for the space in length that each occupied so that it had all sorts of folds, kinks and convolutions in its make-up and all those curtains were in a constant motion of an undulatory sort that caused seemingly endless changes in their color and shape.

I lay there for hours watching the glorious scene until it finally faded away into an ordinary Aurora display, but as long as I live I shall never forget that scene that words cannot describe.

Towards the latter part of June 1918, if I remember correctly, I awoke one night about midnight with a feeling of nausea and knowing that a short walk in the open air usually relieved me, I arose and went out. It was a beautiful starlit night and after walking around for a short time I sat down on a sand pile just north of my house and about fifteen feet distant from the north wall of the house.

Library of Congress

As I sat there facing the east, I was looking at the stars and picking out the different constellations with which I was acquainted with, when suddenly out from behind the northeast corner of the house there rushed the largest meteor that I ever saw.

As near as I could judge it was about two fifths the diameter of the full moon and was travelling at a tremendous speed in an apparently horizontal direction at a height of about forty-five degrees and finally disappearing at a point about north, ten degrees east, and about fifteen degrees above the horizon.

I did not notice any train or its wake such as I had observed in the fall of the Leonids or November meteors.

From the time of its appearance in the southeast as it came out in view from behind the corner of the house to the time of its fading out like a star of small magnitude in the north, there elapsed I should judge somewhere between two and three seconds, certainly not longer than three and possibly not exceeding two seconds.

How high its path was from the earth of course I could not tell, but as it did not seem to disintegrate while apparently near white heat, caused me to think that its course was through the upper layers of the atmosphere, probably at an altitude of forty-five or fifty miles or more.

From the time that I first saw it in the southeast until it was in the northeast it did not seem to vary much in size, but from northeast until its final disappearance it diminished rapidly in size and its apparent motion of translation at right angles to its true course rapidly diminished until at last it seemed to be going almost directly away from me.

As its horizontal course was about forty-five degrees altitude it was probably when nearest to me some sixty or sixty-five miles distant and if so I probably viewed it while it was travelling two hundred or two hundred and fifty miles.

Library of Congress

As the earth travels in its orbit about 19 miles per second, and as the time was midnight when the portion of the earth's surface at that point was on a plane with that portion of the earth's orbit, it follows the meteor was travelling a northeast course relative to the path of the earth and at a considerably greater rate of speed than the earth.

I do not think that it came to the earth at all, but continued on its course.

I expected to see in the scientific journals notice of its appearance as undoubtedly other persons as well as myself witnessed it, but I noticed no account of it.

In regard to its size it appeared to be as near as I could judge about two-fifths the diameter of the full moon or one twelfth of a degree in diameter which at a distance of sixty miles would give a diameter of about three hundred seventy-five or four hundred feet or about the size of the one that made its mark out in Arizona which some of the early explorers thought was the crater of a small volcano, but later scientific men decided that it was the filled up bullet hole of a gigantic meteor that had fallen with such force that it had crushed its way through the overlying strata of rock and had completely buried itself leaving only scattered fragments of meteoric iron around the lip of the crater to show what the body of the meteor was composed of.

The most remarkable instance of a visitation to this kind in my opinion is that described in the Revised Encyclopedia Britannica in the article Meteors, in which the following account is given:

"About 8 o'clock in the evening of Dec. 2nd, 1876, persons in the state of Kansas saw a bright fire ball which, like young Lochinvar, came out of the west, or, strictly speaking, a little south of west, which passed over and disappeared at a point about east of northeast.

"As it was seen by persons both north and south of its line of flight, its height from the earth could be roughly reckoned and it was decided that it was from 60 to 100 mile above the earth at that point. It continued its course over and was seen by persons in the states

Library of Congress

of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Over central Illinois it burst into fragments forming a flock of small meteors that covered a space estimated to be 40 miles long and 5 broad but which kept on the original line of flight until they disappeared above the clouds that at the time of the occurrence covered the state of New York.

“During the latter part of its flight, loud noises and explosions were heard near its line of flight, some of which were so loud as to be audible as far away as 150 miles. The only piece that was recorded as found was picked up by an Indiana farmer who, hearing a thud as of something striking the ground, investigated and found on the snow a fragment that proved to be of meteoric origin and was supposed to be a small piece of the meteor that probably fell in northern New York or Canada or possibly passed on out of the earth's atmosphere to continue its voyage in space.”

The Beavers

Of all animals, the beaver is credited with being the greatest worker and it must be confessed that no other animal has so changed and modified the face of nature in the timbered regions of the northwest as has the beaver

Everywhere you go you will find along the brooks and small streams the remains of his dams and canals which give abundant evidence of his industry and engineering ability.

The longest dam that I ever observed is situated about 3 miles southeast of Eagle Bend, Todd County, Minnesota. It was built long ago to dam the waters of Eagle creek and was situated near where the north fork of the Eagle joins the main stream. I never measured its length but I should judge that it was fully three fourths of a mile in length but did not have the appearance of ever having been anywhere near as high as many other dams that I have seen during my hunting expeditions.

Library of Congress

The highest old dam that I ever noticed was near Mayhew creek, in Benton County, Minnesota. It had been exposed to the elements for probably a hundred years or more since it had been build and was still over seven feet in height for a part of its length of about 30 rods.

The first new dam that I ever saw where the beavers were at work is situated about two or three miles southeast of Mizpah, Beltrami County, Minnesota, on a small stream that I think flows into the Sturgeon, which is a tributary of the Big Fork.

At the time of my visit, there was some snow on the ground and the pond of about five acres above the dam was frozen over with about four inches of ice so that enabled me to observe many things that I had not seen before in regard to the mode of construction of their dam and dwelling.

The dam and pond adjoined the clearing of a settler whose house stood about 20 rods from the dam and in plain sight of it so it would seem that the beaver and the settler were on the best of terms, in fact it looked as though they were in partnership as along the edge of the pond were numerous fallen trees, some of which had been felled by an ax and others beside them had been gnawed down by beaver teeth.

Until then I did not suppose that beaver ever cut such large timber as they had there, as I saw the stump and trunk of a large poplar over twenty inches in diameter that had just been felled by beaver teeth.

There were numerous trees that were partly cut so that it enabled me to see just how they proceeded where they commenced to fell a tree.

In starting on a small tree of a few inches in diameter they would start to girdle the tree with two rows of cuts one a few inches from the ground and the other a few inches upwards and the upper cut downwards and then they tore out the wood in splinters between the two cuts and thus proceeded around the tree until it went down when they

Library of Congress

proceeded to cut it up into lengths of about thirty inches which they then dragged to the water and transported to their house for future use.

At the time of my visit they had been cutting timber during the previous night at the upper end of the pond and had dragged the trees through the snow to an open place in the ice and then taken under water to their house near the dam.

This house was a more pretentious building than I had expected to see.

It stood near the center of the dam and about three or four rods upstream from it and was a substantial affair constructed of brush, sticks and vegetation and thoroughly plastered over with mud, which manner of construction made it very difficult for any marauder to effect an entrance.

It was larger than I had expected to see being over twenty feet in diameter and nearly five feet in height.

But I was more surprised in the appearance of the dam, as all the old 121 dams that I had ever seen were made of earth and this one, viewing it from the downstream side, appeared to be entirely of brush and sticks, but on closer examination I found the upstream side of the dam was made of compact earth.

Before seeing this dam I supposed that there was a regular spillway where the water ran over, but I found in this one that the water ran over the crest in innumerable small streams practically the whole length of the dam.

The settler whose house was near the dam was not at home at the time of my visit, but as he had a notice posted near the stream below the dam warning the public not to trap there I concluded that he had the interest of his four-footed partners at heart and would try and protect them.

Library of Congress

I have since made inquiries in regard to their welfare and at last accounts there was said to be about forty in that colony at that time which number it seems to me is large, as in my estimation it would be difficult for so many to find subsistence at any one point.

According to accounts there are more beaver in the state now than there were a few years ago and I am glad there are for it would be too bad for any inoffensive animal like the beaver to become extinct, for he did more to make the settlement of the country easy than any other agency for if he had not made his dams there would have been practically no meadows. What would the early settlers have fed their stock?

The beaver has always been held up as the pattern of industry and an able engineer, but there is one animal, which although a pest will, I think, outclass the beaver in industry and that animal is the humble Pocket Gopher.

From the time that the frost disappear from the earth in the spring until the ground freezes in the autumn it seems that this pesky little rodent is busy driving his galleries and throwing up his mounds of earth which are, as every farmer knows, such a nuisance in meadow and grain fields.

But for an example of engineering ability considering the strength of the individual and the low order of intelligence to which it belong, a certain species of small spider certainly carries of the palm.

Although I have lived in the state of Minnesota for over seventy years and am conversant with a great portion of it, I have only noticed this variety of spider in one locality and that is near the west end of Kabekona lake in Hubbard county.

This spider makes its home in the tall grass of a certain meadow and chooses for the site of its domicile in which to lay its eggs and rear the young, a tall blade of grass usually about three feet long.

Library of Congress

In this variety of grass the blades arise from a central crown and grow upwards and outwards, with the upper end for a foot or more bending downwards.

At or near the top of the bend the spider selects a place and proceeds to break the blade in four different places at short intervals.

How she accomplishes this difficult job I have never been fortunate enough to discover as a receptacle was always finished when I found it.

The blade is not broken at right angles to its length but in such a way that when the end has made a complete circle there is formed between the two outside breaks a small triangular box held together by web at all of the angles in which the eggs or young spiders are placed.

I have read of a kind of spider that raises a snail shell a foot or more from the ground by attaching a web to it, but that would be an easy job compared to what this one does, as the blades that are selected are usually about three-sixteenths of an inch wide and are of the "fluted" or "flattened M" section which makes them very hard to break.

This variety may be common in other places, but I have never noticed it anywhere except in this one place.

Another curious thing that I have noticed I saw while I was living at Eagle Bend, about 1895 or thereabouts.

Across the little spring brook that ran through my sawmill yard, I put a little dam to direct the water through a covered ditch to my mill for use in the boilers.

One day I was sitting on the bank of this brook a short distance above the dam when I noticed in the water, as it flowed slowly by, a number of small depressions in the surface, such as is made by a grain of dry sand floating on the surface of still water, or the

Library of Congress

depression made by the feet of a water spider as he rests on the surface of water, and I wondered what it was that caused them.

As I looked at them I noticed that from each individual depression there extended to the creek bottom, about six inches below, what appeared to be a slender thread. As I put my hand in the water to take one of the threads out to examine it, I was surprised to see the thread suddenly disappear, being instantly jerked down to the bottom, out of sight.

There were a number of them and as soon as they were disturbed they would instantly disappear.

I did not succeed in finding the owner of the miniature cable, but I have an idea that those thread-like appendages were the breathing tubes of some small organism living in the mud at the bottom of the stream.

Since that time I have often looked for them in similar locations, but have never found them in any other place.

CHAPTER XXIV An Account of a Moose Hunt

While we were living at Walker, a party of us went up north on a hunt for moose. The party consisted of the Rev. Geo. Michaels, J. B. Spencer, Louis Krueger, Robert and George DeLury, and myself.

We went up the Minn. & International Railroad to Northome, then hired a team which took us out to the north side of Island lake, then we hired a man and row boat to take us across the lake to the south side where we camped for the night, a part of us making camp while the others went across the lake for the rest of the camp equipment and supplies, as the boat would not carry everything at one load.

The next morning we hired a team and went on south some 8 miles to where a Mr. Delop lived near Squaw Creek which we crossed and kept on south past Mr. Barron's place and

Library of Congress

camped ½ mile south of his place on a small creek that ran southeast into Squaw creek. We were camped about 5 miles west of Vance Post Office.

We went out the next morning to slaughter moose but when we had gathered in camp in the evening all the game that we could tell of getting was rabbits and ruffed grouse, although we had seen plenty of moose sign and some sign of deer, but the latter did not appear to be very plentiful.

Well for a week it was a repeat of the first day and on Saturday morning, our 8th day, we started out to make a drive but it did not pan out anything so I said "every man for himself" and we separated to still hunt.

I struck off southeast of a big swamp that was southwest of our camp and soon started a big buck out of his bed but did not get a shot at him, and after hunting around for a while I struck north through the swamp, following a low narrow ridge that led north.

On the top of this ridge which was generally only three or four feet above the swamp on either side, ran a deeply worn game trail that had probably been used for hundreds of years.

After having followed this trail for about one half mile, I came upon the tracks of two moose that had been feeding about twenty-four hours previously. They were feeding back and forth on a strip some twenty rods wide, eating off the twigs and small branches of the kinikinick and willows that came in their way.

Their general course was northeast and as I had some experience in following moose, I knew that it was useless to follow their tracks in all 124 their turnings as they would be sure to see the person following them.

There was at the time, a slight breeze from the northeast so I decided to keep the right hand side of their feeding strip and as the swamp was quite dry I could get along without

Library of Congress

making much noise, as I proceeded very slowly and carefully. I would follow a moose track as long as he fed to the right but as soon as he doubled back to the left I would leave it and keep on in the general direction until I struck their tracks again, when I would repeat the manouver.

I had proceeded thus for about one half mile and finally came in sight of tall timber ahead instead of the medium sized tamarack and spruce with which the main part of the swamp was covered. As I approached the tall timber I saw that a low point of dry land projected into the swamp ahead of me so I kept to the right of the point and passed around behind it and came back up the farther side so that I could over look the swamp west of the point.

There was a lot of fallen timber in there and the brown, upturned roots were quite plentiful. One of those brown objects looked suspiciously like the body of a moose and I was intently watching it to detect any movement, when my eye caught a movement up to the right on the dry land, which at first I thought was some red oak leaves gently swaying in the breeze. But as I looked at it steadily, I saw that it all moved in unison which leaves do not do. I then saw that it was the horns of a moose swaying as he fed on some browse high up from the ground.

He was about 14 rods distant and was hidden by a large evergreen tree whose thick branches completely hid him except his horns, which could be seen through an opening between the branches.

As I stood watching, I noticed that there was an opening to the right of the tree that extended for some distance to the northwest.

While I was thus engaged, suddenly out of the brush to the left came another moose and stopped in plain sight a short distance to the left of the other. I instantly drew a bead on it and fired.

Library of Congress

Instantly reloading, I swung the gun and aimed at the opening to the right of the evergreen expecting the head moose would pass through it as he started to escape, and so he did, for just as I had drawn a bead on the opening, in he came. I pressed the trigger and down he went.

Instantly reloading, I whirled the gun back on the first one which had not yet got behind the evergreen, and fired and down it went.

I hurried over there and the one that had got the two shots was dead but the head one was lying with his head up fighting a birch tree that he seemed to think was to blame for his troubles.

I quickly finished him and tried to turn him over on his side to dress him, but I had to give it up and began to whoop for help, hoping that some one of my companions was within hearing distance.

I soon received an answer and soon young George DeLury arrived and shortly afterward Spencer and Krueger came and then we had a job of 125 butchering on hand that kept us busy for a while. We skinned out the fore quarters of the smaller one, but the other we hung up whole after dressing him.

My first shot went through the lungs of the smaller one, and my second had gone through the shoulder blade and back of the large one and my third shot struck the small three inches above my first, breaking its back.

That large moose antlers with 14 points and a spread of 40 inches.

We stayed a few days longer but did not succeed in getting any more, although Spencer and I chased one until we got both of his horns which dropped off naturally. It seems that some of them lose their antlers very early in the season, considerably earlier than deer shed theirs.

Library of Congress

Moose sometimes, that is bulls, give the hunter some thrills.

The next autumn after we took the hunt just described, I went up north to try and get a larger set of antlers than the ones that I had gotten the previous fall. I first went to Northome, the then terminus of the M. & N. railroad, and walked up to Mizpah, where I hunted one day, but not finding conditions favorable, I came back to Blackduck, intending to go out to where we had been the year before, but when I got off the train at Blackduck, there lay on the platform a large bull moose that had been killed about 17 miles southeast near Decker lake on Third river.

I hunted up the man that had brought him in and he told me that there were more around there, so I hired him to take me and my equipment out there, but on the way out he mentioned the name of Jesse Barrick, an old friend of mine, who he said lived near him, so I told him to drop me off when he reached Jess' place, which he did and I found Jess at home and glad to see me.

I stayed with him about ten days but we got no moose and only one deer as the hunting was bad as the swamps were full of water, making the hunting disagreeable, so I went home but while I was there Jess told me of some of his experiences with moose.

It seems that the and some other men that lived about a mile below on the river had been in the habit of killing moose and deer out of season and selling the meat at Blackduck to hotelkeepers and others who were customers of theirs.

Jess, although no coward, got afraid that they were running too big a business in that line and told the others that they had better go slow for a spell but the others thought there was no danger from the wardens, so went on, leaving Jess out, but that night as they were out by the lake jacklighting for moose they ran across an old bull that charged them, smashed their boat to pieces and they escaped only by swimming to the shore and leaving their guns on the shallow lake bottom.

Library of Congress

The next morning they came up to Jess' place to get his boat with which to recover their guns and remains of their boat. Hearing them tell of their encounter with the old bull stirred up Jess' fighting blood and that night he and two of the others went out in his boat, Jess in the bow 126 just back of the jack light, armed with his double breechloader, one barrel 38.55, the other a shot barrel loaded with buckshot.

Moose, during the summer and early fall, like to feed in the shallow lakes on the vegetation growing there, especially the roots of the yellow *pond lily*.

Of the other two men, one sat in the stern to paddle the craft while the other, armed with a Winchester pump shotgun filled with heavy buckshot cartridges, sat on the middle seat as a reinforcement for Jess in case of an emergency, and it was well that the was there, as on finding the bull, Jess gave him a load of buckshot that only caused him to charge the boat as he had done the previous night. As the came, Jess gave him the 38-55 but he came right on.

The paddler tried to get the boat out of his way but could not, but when the bull was nearly to the boat, the pump gun man opened up and pumped load after load of buckshot into the enraged bull's neck at close range, which finally turned him off so that he did not quite reach the boat.

The next morning, they took his trail from where he landed and found him dead a short distance from where we had reached the shore.

When they dressed him they found that the 38.55 bullet had gone through his vitals causing his death but the buckshot probably helped some.

I have been told of several other instances where bull moose have charged boats when they were disturbed during the night when they were feeding.

CHAPTER XXV Leech Lake in Autumn

Library of Congress

“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Sion, on the sides of the north the city of the Great King”. Thus the ancient Hebrew bard break into song in praise of Jerusalem, the beautiful Capitol of the Hebrew nation. Thus also might some bard of the Northland break into a rhapsody of song when first he beholds the beauties of that gem of the north woods known by the uneuphonious name of Leech Lake when the forests that environ its shores are painted by natures Great Artist with all the colors that nature can produce. Of all the lakes of Minnesotas ten thousand that I am acquainted with, I do not know of one that surpasses it in beauty and to a person of an archeological or antiquarian turn of mind, Leech Lake and its smaller sisters Swift, Boy, Steamboat and probably Kabekona also, all of the same group or chain are the most interesting of all because of the mystery that now lies buries beneath their placid waters.

What may be learned in the future by some person who has the time, money and interest in the subject, remains to be seen but from what I have learned I know that at some time in the far distant past these lakes, for some as yet unaccountable reason rose and engulfed forests and flooded the mausoleums of earth that some ancient people had raised over the remains of their dead.

Leech Lake and her sisters are peculiar in one respect in that they have brown in size while the majority of Minnesota's lakes have grown smaller, some in fact have committed suicide by cutting down their outlets until they have drained themselves dry, several instances of which I have observed in Stearns County, Minnesota, near where I formerly lived.

One notable example is that of lake Agassiz. That inland sea which was of no great depth but spread out over a vast territory in northwestern Minnesota and eastern North Dakota and extended north into Canada and of which Red Lake in northern Minnesota and her largest lake wholly within her borders is a pitiful remnant.

Library of Congress

A short time since I was out to Fargo, N.D., and we were traveling swiftly along that splendid piece of new pavement between Detroit Lakes and Glyndon, I kept close watch for the beach wall of that ancient lake, the east shore of which I knew must be between Detroit and Glyndon.

It was not hard to find for as we descended the long gradual slope to the Buffalo river a few miles east of Glyndon a long line of gravel pits extending 128 north and south as far as I could see, showed very plainly where the waves of that ancient lake had washed the gravel clean and the expansion of the ice in winter had shoved it up in ridges. A little farther west I noticed in the ditches that peculiar sticky clay known as gumbo which had settled to the bottom of the ancient lake and on top of which the rich soil of the Red River valley had later formed.

I do not think that lake Agassiz existed for a great length of time Geologically speaking the gravel ridges thrown up, although well defined, did not seem to be any larger than those at the NE end of Leech lake, north of the outlet at Leech river. I think that one reason that Lake Agassiz' ancient beach wall is no larger at that point is because the glacial drift covering that part of the state is almost destitute of gravel and sand whilst the glacial drift in the vicinity of Leech Lake is composed to a considerable extent of gravel and sand.

Well, I must return to my subject, and I would remark right here that it is unfortunate that a lake as beautiful as Leech Lake is, that is compelled to bear such a miserable name. Why could they not have named it Minising lake for it certainly contains enough islands to entitle it to that name (Island lake). I do not profess to know much of the Chippewa language but I do not think that the names that they bestowed on their lakes were as a rule as euphonious as were those that were named by the Sioux, such as Minnetonka, Minneiska, Minneota, Minnewakon and others.

The Chippewa vocabulary from what I have been told is limited to less than 1,000 words, consequently one word often means several different objects or things, for instance the

Library of Congress

word Manomin, the proper name of wild rice, also is used to designate other grains, even ground corn and oats is also called Manomin by them.

The Chippewa word for bread, Bahquajigun, also has to do duty for cake and even pie, so their language is not rich in synonyms.

Leech Lake and itesisterlakes in the first place are an anomaly. Of the many lakes in northern Minnesota with which I am acquainted there are no others that I know of that resembles these in one respect and that is in age of the lake.

If in my old age I should blossom out as a lecturer on the Geology and Topography of the counties of Cass, Hubbard, Beltrami, Todd, Stearns, and Wright, and should appear before an audience and tell them that I had proof to show that Leech Lake as it was when the first saw it, and as it is now, is one of the youngest or latest made lakes of the many that the state of Minnesota is blest with, they would probably be surprised; but if I should tell them that a few hundred years ago, possibly a thousand, that Leech lake as it has been lately known, did not exists; that the basin it now occupies was then a good part dry land with seven or more lakes and ponds, scattered over it, some of the largest of which were connected by streams, they would probably think that the old captain of the "Leila D" had gone "bughouse" and should be shut up in an asylum to prevent him from doing damage; but I 129 believe that if they would listen for an hour and a half or possibly two hours to a statement of the evidence that he would offer in support of his proposition, they would come to the conclusion that it would not endanger the general public to allow him to run at large for a time at least.

What first started me on this line of investigation was something that happened in the autumn of 1895 a few months after a I had commenced running my boat "Leila D" on Leech Lake.

Library of Congress

The M. & I. railroad had just been graded and the steel had been laid as far as the SE end of the big bridge at what is now Ah-gwah-ching.

One day Mr. Kimball, one of the officers of the railroad, came to me and inquired of me whether I could transport about 120,000 feet of long square timber from the bridge to the Federal DAM on Leech river. I replied that I could, and he then inquired what I charge per M. and I told him that if he would lay 10 or 12 lengths of steel out on the bridge so I could unload the cars direct in to the water, and would loan me two 100 lb. kegs of 8 and 10 inch spikes and crowbar for to pull them with, that I would unload the timber from the cars and deliver it at the Government Dam for \$1.50 per M. He told me that that would be satisfactory, so they shipped the timber up and left the cars standing on the track east of the bridge and I had the honor for running the first car of any kind that ever ran on that bridge. I took the timber over in three rafts of about 40,000 ft. each.

We had never been over to the outlet of the lake before, and my curiosity was aroused by seeing, near the shore, just a short distance south of the outlet in the white sand of the lake bottom a lot of what I then judged to be willow grubs and I remarked to my brother Chas. M. Dally, who now resides at Washougal, Washington, and who was visiting me at the time; that Leech Lake must have been very low at one time to enable willows to grow in such a place and I dismissed the subject from my mind for a time. The ice in Leech Lake usually in the spring breaks up and goes out with a southerly wind.

If I remember correctly it went out with a northerly wind only twice during the thirteen years that I resided at Walker, but a year or two after I say the grubs, the ice went out in a gale from the SW and while the ice was still very firm and it ripped things up, as the boys say, to "beat the band"

Shortly after it went out I saw near the point at the SW corner of Goose Island, where it had shoved a granite boulder that I should judge would weigh upwards of two tons, from near the waters edges, up a 10 or 15 per cent grade for a considerable distance.

Library of Congress

At the same time it pile up over at the east end of the lake and dug out and shoved up on the shore above high water mark my supposed willow grubs where I found them shortly after and to my great surprise I found that instead of being willow as I had supposed, that they were oak stumps that had undoubtedly grown right where I had first noticed them.

When I found them where I well knew they was nothing of the kind previously, it set me to thinking.

130

I went to the steamer and got an ax and tried cutting into one of them and I discovered that they were about as hard and tough as cows horn.

The wood was a dark brown, almost black with a faint bluish tinge.

The stumps, of which there were about 15 or 20, were about 10 inches in diameter, only the duramen or heartwood remaining.

I have often wished since that I had gathered them all and preserved them, but I was busy at the time and did not want to bother with them.

From what I have learned since I think that they were identical with what is termed "Bog Oak".

Finding those stumps in the place where they grew started me on a line of investigation that I pursued for the thirteen seasons that I ploughed old Leech in the Leila D. From previous experience I knew that oak timber will not thrive unless the water table is several feet beneath the surface on which they stand. Consequently, I have doubt that at the time those oaks lived and flourished that the surface of Leech Lake was very likely eight or ten feet lower than at the present time.

Library of Congress

When I first began navigating Leech Lake there existed at what is known as the "narrows" between Squaw Point and the Agency peninsula three distinct channels or ancient river beds, all of which had been filled both at the easterly and westerly ends by the action of the waves.

The most northerly and largest of the three ran near the shore of Squaw Point and was quite crooked and tortuous.

The central one was nearly straight running very nearly east and west and resembled a glacial groove except that it did not follow the line of the latest glacial movement. The third or southerly one's general course was NE but it was very crooked indicating that the stream that made it had existed for a considerable length of time for streams are like some individuals of the human species in that, longer they exist the more crooked they become and also the swifter they travel the greater the sinuositities.

The large northern channel no doubt was there the Steamboat river delivered its water into the main lake west of Goose island.

It was very likely the ancient channel of the old Mississippi when it came down from near lake Irving to Steamboat lake. The old Mississippi channel is plainly visible where the State road crosses it between Nary and Bemidji and also wher the country road crosses it east of Nary and near Rosby.

All the streams of any size that enter Leech Lake are deep near their mouths.

Boy river is deep from the foot of Boy lake at Red Hair's as is also Swift river between Swift lake and Boy lake.

Kabekona river is deep from near the lake to the head of Kabekona bay and where it passes through the small mud lake below Benedict there is a deep serpentine channel that has been made by a stream. Steamboat river is deep all its course and the Necktie is deep

for a considerable distance above Steamboat lake. Sucker brook, Reagans Creek and in fact all the streams the flow into Leech Lake are deep where they enter the lake.

131

At the head of Sucker bay about 18 miles NE of Walker there stands an ancient mound built no doubt by that vanished people that formerly occupied at different times the greater portion of the United States. Who they were we have no mean of knowing but we do know that they thought enough of their dead to go to a lot of trouble and expend in some instances an immense amount of labor on a resting place for their dead.

My learned friend the late Jacob V. Brower, who spent the later years of his life investigating the ancient mounds of northern Minnesota and who wrote a very interesting book describing them was of the opinion that the Sioux Indians were the builders of those of northern Minnesota but he never convinced me that they had anything to do with it as the arguments and proofs that he advanced in support of his theory would apply to any other of the Indian tribes that formerly welt in northern Minnesota since historic times. In the first place the majority of those mounds were exceedingly ancient. Down in Stearns and Wright counties where I passed my boyhood, there were many that stood in the heavy timber and the trees on those mounds were just as large a elsewhere. I knew of a number that stood in fields and others that roads cut through and the black mould on those mounds seemed just as deep as it was in other place, so I have come to the conclusion that those mounds or at least the greater portion are several hundred, at least, and possibly a thousand or more years old.

But to return to that mound that stands at the head of Sucker Bay.

It is built on the beach wall that has been thrown up by the action of the expanding ice and the waves since Leech Lake attained its present level and from appearances it is in my opinion the most recently built mound that I am acquainted with. It stands some 40 to 50 rods east of the mouth of Sucker brook and at the time that I first saw it 32 years ago,

Library of Congress

some small animal had dug a den in the top of it and in his excavations had thrown out a large number of human bones, the greater number of which were the phalanges of the hands and feet but there were some large bones, one of which was the Pelvis bone of a large person.

These bones were in a good state of preservation at that which indicated that they had not been buried only a few hundred years.

North of the sea wall on which this mound stands is quite an extensive swamp of grass and cat tails that extends up the east side of the brook for a considerable distance. In this swamp and about 50 rods NW of the aforesaid mound and a few rods east of the brook I noticed two slight raises in the swamp and I wondered what caused them as they did not resemble the remains of muskrat or beaver houses. Having a mattock on my boat I took it and went over to investigate.

After digging through about a foot of boggy peat I struck a layer of black mould such as is found in heavy hardwood timber. In this black mould were pieces of charcoal and also some broken pieces of granite that had undoubtedly been used for net sinkers like those that the Indians use now. A little lower down I found a human kneecap or Patella and a little 132 lower still I found portions of several large bones, the different pieces of which were not contiguous, showing that they were broken previous to their deposition in the mound. But what interested me most was the finding of a human lower jaw bone with three molar teeth still in it, and what was most strange was those three molars were as flat on their upper surfaces as though they ha been ground off with an Emery wheel.

I am now 83 years of age and what molars I have left still have the depressions that they had years ago. How old that individual was that possessed that jawbone or what food did he subsist on that caused his teeth to be in the shape that I found them I cannot comprehend. Now the question is when were those two mounds out there in that swamp built?

Library of Congress

Certainly not since the lake attained the level that it now stands at.

Down in Wright and Stearns counties where I formerly live there were a great many mounds and it was very seldom that you found one that was built on low ground, nearly all of them were built on high ground and near lakes.

There is one at the east end of Clearwater lake near where J. H. Miller's Resort formerly stood, that was opened some 45 or 50 year ago and in it were the skeletons of a number of men (7 if I remember right) that had been buried in an upright position, just as though a hole had been dug in the mound large enough to contain their bodies standing erect and then earth covered over their heads.

I never believed that those skeletons were the original occupants of that mound but were buried long after the mound was built.

I have an idea that those seven men were the victims of an ambush, such as happened at Maine Prairie, Stearns County, in the spring of 1860, when Hole-in-the-day, the chief of the Chippewas and 12 of his men ambushed 10 Sioux and killed 4 of them.

CHAPTER XXVI A Monograph on Kabekona Lake

Kabekannaw Sagiagun as the Chippewas call it is one of the beautiful lakes of northern Minnesota and is situated about two and one-half miles south of Laporte.

Almost everybody knows it as Kabekona accenting the first and third syllables, giving the latter the sound of long O.

I remember the first time that I ever heard it pronounced in that way was by a man by the name of Leslie from Brainerd and I wondered how he came to mispronounce it as I had always heard it pronounced Kabet-an-now by both Indians and Whites.

Library of Congress

Kabekona lake is not only a beautiful lake, but it is also a very interesting one from the fact that I know of no other lake in northern Minnesota that has kept such a detailed record of itself as has beautiful Kabekona.

While the other lakes of the Leech lake group have risen eight or ten feet from their original level thereby flooding forests and covering ancient burial mounds made by a vanished people. Kabekona lake has been by its own records some six or seven feet higher and at some period of its existence some eight or ten feet lower than it is at the present time.

According to the ancient lake walls Kabekona lake formerly covered a great deal more territory than it does at present as it extended from where the village of Benedict now stands, where its eastern shore was located, to a point a mile west of its present shore line.

When I first came to Leech lake in the early spring of 1895 and built my steamer the "Leila D" I soon had considerable business up the Kabekona and I had a chance to look things over and on one of my hunting trips I found the remains of an ancient lake wall out in the woods north of where the railroad now runs and northwest of where Benedict now stands and afterwards I found a similar wall south of the big marsh that lies west of Benedict, showing that a lake formerly existed where the marsh is at the present time. Undoubtedly when the lake was first formed, dry land blocked the outlet at Benedict and the lake overflowing at the lowest point of its bank soon cut its outlet down and drained off a portion of its waters.

At the east end of Kabekona lake and also at its northwest end there are five well defined lake walls showing that it has existed for a considerable time at a height to correspond to each of these walls.

I do not suppose that there are many people in Laporte and vicinity

Library of Congress

Scene at Bridge near Outlet of Kabekona Lake

135 that are aware that Lakeport township has what comes nearest to being a coal mine of anything in this northern country, but such is the case.

Down at the outlet of the lake the flat south of the river where the Barker-Valentine cottages are is all made land having been thrown up by the lake in the ages that have elapsed since the last glacier descended from the Laurentian range west of Hudson bay and dug and tore up the face of this part of the world leaving immense blocks of ice incorporated in the drift of sand gravel and boulder clay.

Geologists tell us that when those blocks melted the depression left by them being in many instances full of water, thus made our lakes.

Well, I will return to that near coal mine. That flat south of the river I just referred to is underlain by five beds of lignite or brown coal, the thickest of which is about fourteen inches and the others thinner, the thinnest one being four or five inches in thickness.

I do not know that the whole flat is thus underlain but that portion bordering the river at that south end of the bridge is.

When I used to run my steamer up the river where that bridge now is located I never dreamed that those seams of brown coal were under the rivers gravel bed, but such was the case.

Now the question is, how were those seams of lignite laid down there?

In my mind there are two theories of their origin.

My first theory was that when the lake was at about its present level, that a ridge or lake wall was formed by the action of the waves and behind that wall where the water was

Library of Congress

several feet deep a bog formed on the surface of the water. But how did the sand and gravel get on top of the bog someone may ask?

Since I lived at my place near Kabekona lake the outlet at the east end of the lake came very near being closed by sand and gravel washed into it by waves created by strong westerly winds.

If something like that happened late in the autumn, the expansion of the ice during the winter might have piled up more stuff in the outlet blocking it completely to such an extent that a dam was formed which was raised higher by succeeding additions of gravel and sand, and thus the water in the lake might have been raised several feet above that behind the wall where the bog was, but finally the lake would break over the wall and wash the sand and gravel onto the bog and pressing it down to the bottom where it stayed, thus forming the first or lowest seam, which process might have have repeated each time that a layer of lignite was formed.

But I think that my second theory is the correct one, which is this:

All the other lakes of the Leech lake group were at one time in the long ages that have elapsed since the last glacial epoch, eight or ten feet lower than they are now and I believe that Kabekona was nearly on a level with them.

I think that where the Barker-Valentine flat now is the waters of the lake was shallow and that bog formed there just as it does not father

Scene on North Shore of Kabekona Lake.

137 down.

The prevailing southwest winds raising waves which carried sand and gravel onto this bog pressing it down and as all of the group rose the process was repeated until all of the

Library of Congress

seams of lignite were formed, then the ridges of sand gravel were made by the expansion of the ice in winter and spring and the waves in summer and autumn.

Although the vicinity of Kabekona is deficient in ancient mounds still some interesting finds have been made, one of which is most peculiar in that no one like it has come to my notice.

Some years since Cap Lawrence, while hunting found near the mouth of the Kabekona river, found a small cannon ball about one and a half inches in diameter.

It is a well made piece of cast iron, being as near a perfect sphere as I ever saw.

The question naturally arises, "How did that little cannon ball find its way to the place where the keen-eyed old captain found it?"

My idea is that some Hudson Bay Company fur-gathering boat came by way of up Leech river and lake, then up the Kabekona river and lake and tied up near the mouth of the Kabekona river, where while trading with the Indians, they fired off their small cannon, most likely just to show the Indians what it would do and thus put them in awe.

A number of years ago Mr. Andrew Ernest and another man were grading a causeway at the end of the bridge that crosses the Gulch creek about forty rods west of its mouth and while doing so they dug out an old gun barrel that had been buried several beneath the surface of the earth.

With the gun barrel were the bones of some large animal, which they thought were moose bones.

Another gun barrel, so I was informed, was dug up in the same locality and it had one peculiarity in that it had a small roll of birchbark enclosed in the barrel.

Library of Congress

I would have liked to have examined that roll of bark for I imagine that it was either a letter of a white man or else a pictograph by some Indian artist.

Just south of the Gulch creek bridge some workmen while repairing the road opened a gravel pit in the central and largest of the five lake walls that exist at the west end of Kabekona lake.

In that pit they found the tibia or thigh bone of a large animal, but of what species no one knew.

I thought that it might be the bone of a buffalo or bison, but Mr. R. Unruh, on seeing it said it was not a buffalo bone as he had seen lots of them out west.

In my young days I killed a number of black bears and I think that this bone resembles the thigh bone of a bear more than that of any other animal with which I am acquainted, but if that bone belonged to a bear he was a large one, for I believe the animal that furnished it weighed as much as a 138 thousand pounds.

The gravel in which that bone was found was considerably cemented together by the lime which had been dissolved from the earth above where the bone lay by the descending rain water charged with carbonic acid during the time that it had lain there, probably five thousand years or more.

When Judge Tombs as he was called was running his saw mill on the point where Mr. Roby now lives he dug a well to supply his boiler with water.

At a depth of nine feet he struck a bed of marl, the ancient bed of the lake. In that marl he found a deer's horn. I did not see the horn, but parties who did told me that it resembled the horns of the deer that now live here. That horn was probably dropped in the shallow waters of the lake some five thousand or more years ago, as I can see on the Tomb's point only three of the five seawalls found elsewhere around the lake.

Library of Congress

That tomb's point was built up from the earth that was washed out by the Kabekona river when it ran in the valley just east of the Tomb's house.

In the summer time Kabekona is one of Minnesota's most beautiful lakes but in autumn its bordering forests lack the gorgeous red coloring that the maples give to the forest border its larger sister, Leech lake, but what Kabekona lacks in red is made up by the beautiful yellows of its forest in autumn when its many white birches and upland Larches ripen their foliage and take on that deep shade of yellow that is characteristics of the Birches, Larches, Wild Ginseng and Spiknard.

I consider the upland Larch with its light feathery leaves, the most beautiful conifer that grows in our forests, but it is exceedingly scarce.

Well, to sum up, Kabekona is one of Minnesota's most beautiful lakes, also one of the most interesting.